





"KIOMI, OLD FRIEND!"

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The Adventures of Harry Richmond.

CHAPTER XLV.

MY FATHER IS MIRACULOUSLY RELIEVED BY FORTUNE.



Y rejoinder to my aunt Dorothy laid stress on my father's pledge of his word of honour as a gentleman to satisfy the squire on a stated day. I shrank from the idea of the Riversley crow over him. As to the lady, I said we would see that her money was fastened to her securely before she committed herself to the deeps. The money to be advanced to me would lie at my bankers', in my name, untouched: it would be repaid in the bulk after a season. This I dwelt on particularly, both to satisfy her and to appease my sense of the

obligation. An airy pleasantry in the tone of this epistle amused me while writing it and vexed me when it had gone. But a letter sent, upon special request, by railway, should not, I thought, be couched in the ordinary strain. Besides one could not write seriously of a person like Lady Sampleman. I consulted my aunt Dorothy's scruples by stopping my father on his way to the lady. His carriage was at the door: I suggested money-lenders: he had tried them all. He begged me to permit him

to start: but it was too ignominious to think of its being done under my very eyes, and I refused. He had tried the money-lenders yesterday. They required a mortgage solidier than expectations for the sum we wanted. Dettermain and Newson had declined to undertake the hypothecation of his annuity. Providence pointed to Sampleman.

"You change in a couple of nights, Richie," said he. "Now I am always the identical man. I shall give happiness to one sincerely good soul. I have only to offer myself—let me say in becoming modesty, I believe so. Let me go to her and have it over, for with me a step taken is a thing sanctified. I have in fact held her in reserve. Not that I think fortune has abandoned us: but a sagacious schemer will not leave everything to the worthy dame. I should have driven to her yesterday, if I had not heard from Dettermain and Newson that there was a hint of negotiation for a compromise. Government is fairly frightened." He mused. "However, I slept on it, and arrived at the conclusion this morning that my old Richie stood in imminent jeopardy of losing the fruit of all my toil. The good woman will advance the money to her husband. When I pledged my word to the squire I had reason to imagine the two months a sufficient time. We have still a couple of days. I have heard of men who lost heart at the eleventh hour, and if they had only hung on, with gallant faith in themselves, they would have been justified by the result. Faith works miracles. At least it allows time for them."

His fertile ingenuity spared mine the task of persuading him to postpone the drive to Lady Sampleman. But that he would have been prompt to go, at a word from me, and was actually about to go when I entered his house, I could not question.

He drove in manifest relief of mind to Dettermain and Newson's. An ignoble-looking rascal, calling himself Kellington, ran some steps after his carriage. Unable to obtain the shedding of a single glance he slunk back to me, and gabbled a tale of his sister's having bequeathed all her money to Roy Richmond to live in splendour, leaving him destitute. A tale delivered in alcoholic breath under a tipsy hat does not inspire confidence. I tossed him a sovereign, fancying I had heard my father mention his sister's name.

"If you're Roy Richmond's son, sir," he said, "tell him from me Mrs. Disher can't keep her husband's bills in the ledger much longer, and old Bagenhope's drinking himself to death; and there's his last witness gone. I'm no enemy to him, nor to you, sir, as long as I get my pension. That's mine, I say."

Mrs. Waddy knew of this man Kellington as being "one of the pensioners."

I had an appointment with Mr. Temple at a great political club, to meet the gentlemen who were good enough to undertake the introduction of the infant member to the House of Commons. My incessantly twisting circumstances foiled the pleasure and pride due to me. From the club I bent my steps to Temple's district, and met in the street young Eckart

von Hof, my champion and second on a memorable occasion, fresh upon London, and looking very Germanic in this drab forest of our city people. He could hardly speak of Deutschland for enthusiasm at the sight of the moving masses. His object in coming to England, he assured me honestly, was to study certain editions of Tibullus in the British Museum. When he deigned to speak of Sarkeld, it was to say that Prince Hermann was frequently there. I gave him no chance to be sly, though he pushed for it, at a question of the Princess Ottilia's health.

The funeral pace of the block of cabs and omnibuses engrossed his attention. Suddenly the Englishman afforded him an example of the reserve of impetuosity we may contain. I had seen my aunt Dorothy in a middle line of cabs coming from the City, and was darting in a twinkling among wheels and shafts and nodding cab-horse noses to take her hand and know the meaning of her presence in London. She had family business to do: she said no more. I mentioned that I had checked my father for a day or two. She appeared grateful. Her anxiety was extreme that she might not miss the return train, so I relinquished her hand, commanded the cabman to hasten, and turned to rescue Eckart—too young and faithful a collegian not to follow his friend, though it were into the lion's den—from a terrific entanglement of horseflesh and vehicles brawled over by a splendid collision of tongues. Secure on the pavement again, Eckart humbly acknowledged that the English tongue would come out upon occasions. I did my best to amuse him. Whether it amused him to see me take my seat in the House of Commons, and hear a debate in a foreign language, I cannot say; but the only pleasure of which I was conscious at that period lay in the thought that he or his father, Baron von Hof, might some day relate the circumstance at Prince Ernest's table, and fix in Ottilia's mind the recognition of my having tried to perform my part of the contract. Beggared myself, and knowing Prince Hermann to be in Sarkeld, all I hoped for was to show her I had followed the path she traced. My state was lower: besides misfortune I now found myself exalted only to feel my profound insignificance.

"The standard for the House is a man's ability to do things," said Charles Etherell, my friendly introducer, by whom I was passinglly advised to preserve silence for two or three sessions.

He counselled the study of Foreign Affairs for a present theme. I talked of our management of them in the strain of Dr. Julius von Karsteg.

"That's journalism, or clippings from a bilious essay; it won't do for the House," he said. "Reville the House to the country, if you like, but not the country to the House."

When I begged him to excuse my absurdity, he replied: "It's full of promise, so long as you're silent."

But to be silent was to be merely an obedient hound of the whip. And if the standard for the House was a man's ability to do things, I was in the seat of a better man. External sarcasms upon the House, flavoured

with justness, came to my mind, but if these were my masters surrounding me, how indefinitely small must I be!

Leaving the House on that first night of my sitting, I received Temple's congratulations outside, and, as though the sitting had exhausted every personal sentiment, I became filled with his; under totally new sensations, I enjoyed my distinction through the perception of my old comrade's friendly jealousy.

"I'll be there, too, some day," he said, moaning at the prospect of an extreme age before such honours would befall him.

The society of Eckart prevented me from urging him to puff me up with his talk as I should have wished, and after I had sent the German to be taken care of by Mrs. Waddy, I had grown so accustomed to the worldly view of my position that I was fearing for its stability. Threats of a petition against me were abroad. Supposing the squire disinherited me, could I stand? An extraordinary appetite for wealth, a novel appreciation of it—which was, in truth, a voluntary enlistment into the army of mankind, and the adoption of its passions—pricked me with an intensity of hope and dread concerning my dependence on my grandfather. I lay sleepless all night, tossing from Riversley to Sarkeld, condemned, it seemed, to marry Janet and gain riches and power by renouncing my hope of the princess and the glory belonging to her, unless I should within a few hours obtain a show of figures at my bankers'.

I had promised Etherell to breakfast with him. A note—a faint scream—despatched by Mrs. Waddy to Mr. Temple's house informed me that 'the men' were upon them. If so, they were the forerunners of a horde, and my father was as good as extinguished. He staked everything on success; consequently, he forfeited pity. Good-by to ambition, I thought, and ate heartily, considering robustly the while how far lower than the general level I might avoid falling. The report of the debates in morning papers—doubtless, more flowing and, perhaps, more grammatical than such as I gave ear to over-night—had the odd effect on me of relieving me from the fit of subserviency into which the speakers had sunk me. A conceit of towering superiority took its place, and as Etherell was kind enough to draw me out and compliment me, I was attacked by a tragic sense of contrast between my capacities and my probable fortunes. Still, it was open to me to marry Janet. But this meant the loosening of myself with my own hand for ever from her who was my mentor and my glory, to gain whom I was in the very tide-way. I could not submit to it, though the view was like that of a green field of the springs passed by a climber up the crags. I went to Anna Penrhys to hear a woman's voice, and partly told her of my troubles. She had heard Mr. Hipperdon express his confident opinion that he should oust me from my seat. Her indignation was at my service as a loan: it sprang up fiercely and spontaneously in allusions to something relating to my father, of which the Marquis of Edbury had been guilty. "How you can bear it!" she exclaimed, for I was not wordy. The exclamation,

however, stung me to put pen to paper—the woman was not so remote in me not to be roused by the woman. I wrote to Edbury and to Heriot, bidding him call on the young nobleman. Late at night I was at my father's door to perform the act of duty of seeing him, and hearing how he had entertained Eckart, if he was still master of his liberty. I should have known him better: I expected silence and gloom. The windows were lighted brilliantly. As the hall-door opened, a band of stringed and wood instruments commenced an overture. Mrs. Waddy came to me in the hall; she was unintelligible. One thing had happened to him at one hour of the morning, and another at another hour. He was at one moment suffering the hands of the "officers" on his shoulder. "And behold you, Mr. Harry! a knock, a letter from a messenger, and he conquers Government!" It struck me that the epitome of his life had been played in a day: I was quite incredulous of downright good fortune. He had been giving a dinner followed by a concert, and the deafening strains of the music clashed with my acerb spirit, irritating me excessively. "Where are those men you spoke of?" I asked her. "Gone," she replied,—“gone long ago!”

"Paid?" said I.

She was afraid to be precise, but repeated that they were long since gone.

I singled Jorian DeWitt from among a crowd of loungers on the stairs and landing between the drawing-rooms. "Oh, yes, Government has struck its flag to him," Jorian said. "Why weren't you here to dine? Alphonse will never beat his achievement of to-day. Jenny and Carigny gave us a quarter-of-an-hour before dinner—a capital idea!—'VEUVE ET BACHELIER.' As if by inspiration. No preparation for it, no formal taking of seats. It seized amazingly—floated small talk over the soup beautifully."

I questioned him again.

"Oh, dear, yes; there can't be a doubt about it," he answered, airily. "Roy Richmond has won his game."

Two or three urgent men round a great gentleman were extracting his affable approbation of the admirable nature of the experiment of the Chassediane before dinner. I heard laudation of the dinner and the Chassediane, the music and the cook, down even to the sherry, which must have been answerable for the discussion among certain younger male guests of Lady Edbury's conduct in coming. I gathered that she had defied some opposition of her family. Edbury joined this knot of talkers, saying: "He's a Jupiter! I shall take to swearing by him." Apparently they were aware of what had happened in the house at a particular hour of the morning. "Richmond!" Edbury nodded to me, with a queer semi-interrogation in his look, very like a dog's weighing the disposition of the hand that holds the stick. Otherwise it was not a face to betray secrets, for there was nothing but a sheet behind it. The ladies present were not, I could judge, such as my father would have surrounded Lady

de Strode with, though they had titles and were in the popular eye great ladies. I saw that Eckart was comfortably seated, and telling Jorian to provide for him in the matter of tobacco, I went to my room, confused beyond power of thought by the sensible command of fortune my father, fortune's sport at times, seemed really to have.

His statement of the circumstances bewildered me even more. He was in no hurry to explain them; when we met next morning he waited for me to question him, and said, "Yes. I think we have beaten them so far!" His mind was pre-occupied, he informed me, concerning the defence of a lady much intrigued against, and resuming the subject: "Yes, we have beaten them up to a point, Richie. And that reminds me: would you have me go down to Riversley and show the squire the transfer tickets? At any rate you can now start for Sarkeld, and you do, do you not? To-day: to-morrow at latest."

I insisted: "But how, and in what manner has this money been paid?" The idea struck me that he had succeeded in borrowing it.

"Transferred to me in the Bank, and intelligence of the fact sent to Determain and Newson, my lawyers," he replied. "Beyond that, I know as little as you, Richie, though indubitably I hoped to intimidate them. If," he added, with a countenance perfectly simple and frank, "they expect me to take money for a sop, I am not responsible, as I by no means provoked it, for their mistake. I proceed. The money is useful to you, so I rejoice at it."

Five and twenty thousand pounds was the amount.

"No stipulation was attached to it?"

"None. Of course a stipulation was implied: but of that I am not bound to be cognizant."

"Absurd!" I cried: "it can't have come from the quarter you suspect."

"Where else?" he asked.

I thought of the squire, Lady Edbury, my aunt, Lady Sampleman, Anna Penrhys, some one or other of his frantic female admirers. But the largeness of the amount, and the channel selected for the payment, precluded the notion that any single person had come to succour him in his imminent need, and, as it chanced, mine.

Observing that my speculations wavered, he cited numerous instances in his life of the special action of Providence in his favour, and was bold enough to speak of a star, which his natural acuteness would have checked his doing before me, if his imagination had not been seriously struck.

"You hand the money over to me, sir?" I said.

"Without a moment of hesitation, my dear boy," he melted me by answering.

"You believe you have received a bribe?"

"That is my entire belief—the sole conclusion I can arrive at. I will tell you, Richie: the old Marquis of Edbury once placed five thousand

pounds to my account on a proviso that I should—neglect, is the better word, my case. I inherited from him at his death ; of course his demise cancelled the engagement. He had been the friend of personages implicated. He *knew*. I suspect he apprehended the unpleasant position of a witness."

"But what was the stipulation you presume was implied?" said I.

"Something that passed between lawyers: I am not bound to be cognizant of it. Abandon my claims for a few thousands? Not for ten, not for ten hundred times the sum!"

To be free from his boisterous influence, which made my judgment as unsteady as the weather-glass in a hurricane, I left the house and went straight to Determain and Newson, who astonished me quite as much by assuring me that the payment of the money was a fact. There was no mystery about it. The intelligence and transfer papers, they said, had not been communicated to them by the firm they were opposed to, but by a solicitor largely connected with the aristocracy; and his letter had briefly declared the unknown donator's request that legal proceedings should forthwith be stopped. They offered no opinion of their own. Suggestions of any kind, they seemed to think, had weight, and all of them an equal weight, to conclude from the value they assigned to every idea of mine. The name of the solicitor in question was Charles Adolphus Bannerbridge. It was indeed my old, one of my oldest friends; the same by whom I had been led to a feast and an evening of fun when a little fellow starting in the London streets. Sure of learning the whole truth from old Mr. Bannerbridge, I walked to his office and heard that he had suddenly been taken ill. I strode on to his house, and entered a house of mourning. The kind old man, remembered by me so vividly, had died overnight. Miss Bannerbridge perceived that I had come on an errand, and with her gentle good breeding led me to speak of it. She knew nothing whatever of the sum of money. She was, however, aware that an annuity had been regularly paid through the intervention of her father. I was referred by her to a Mr. Richards, his recently-established partner. This gentleman was ignorant of the whole transaction. Throughout the day I strove to combat the pressure of evidence in favour of the idea that an acknowledgment of special claims had been wrested from the enemy. Temple hardly helped me, though his solid sense was dead against the notions entertained by my father and Jorian DeWitt, and others besides, our elders. The payment of the sum through the same channel which supplied the annuity, pointed distinctly to an admission of a claim, he inclined to think, and should be supposed to come from a personage having cause either to fear him or to assist him. He set my speculations astray by hinting that the request for the stopping of the case might be a blind. A gift of money, he said shrewdly, was a singularly weak method of inducing a man to stop the suit of a life-time. I thought of Lady Edbury; but her income was limited, and her expenditure was not:—of Lady Sampleman, but it was notorious that she loved her purse as well

as my aunt Dorothy, and was even more, in the squire's phrase, "a petticoated parsimony." Anna Penrhys appeared the likelier, except for the fact that the commencement of the annuity was long before our acquaintance with her. I tried her on the subject. Her amazement was without a shadow of reserve. "It's Welsh, it's not English," she remarked. I knew no Welshwoman save Anna. "Do you know the whole of his history?" said she. Possibly one of the dozen unknown episodes in it might have furnished the clue, I agreed with her.

The sight of twenty-one thousand pounds placed to my credit in the Funds assuaged my restless spirit of investigation. My father's necessities had extracted four thousand. He pleaded for an excuse an unconscionable creditor, and was lightly exonerated by me, considering that I had determined to make a round of payments as soon as the notification had fulfilled its mission at Riversley. My pending affair with Edbury kept me awaiting an answer from Heriot, and when that came I found that I had to run down to see a patient under nursing charge of Lady Maria Higginson over Durstan ridges. Letters from the squire and my aunt Dorothy urged me to betake myself to Riversley, there finally to decide upon what my course should be.

"Now that you have the money, pray," St. Parsimony wrote,—"pray be careful of it. Do not let it be encroached on. Remember it is to serve one purpose. It should be guarded strictly against every appeal for aid," &c., with much underlining.

My grandfather returned the papers. His letter said: "I shall not break my word. Please to come and see me before you take steps right or left."

So here was the dawn again.

I could in a day or two start for Sarkeld. Meanwhile, to give my father a lesson, I discharged a number of bills, and paid off the bond to which Edbury's name was attached. My grandfather, I knew, was too sincerely and punctiliously a gentleman in practical conduct to demand a further inspection of my accounts. These things accomplished, I took the train to see Heriot, instead of my own people; for he, I said to myself, was unwell, and Janet, I did not say to myself, was in suspense; moreover, I had a strong objection to being interrogated as to whether I had sold stock and spent a farthing of the money by Dorothy Beltham. She had written two letters of a painfully miserly tone, warning me not to touch it. My heart was moved when driving within eyeshot of Riversley, but I cheated it, and set my face to Durstan, little imagining that adventures to change and colour the course of one's life may spring across the passage of a heath.

CHAPTER XLVI.

WITHIN AN INCH OF MY LIFE.

A SINGLE tent stood in a gully running from one of the gravel-pits of the heath, near an iron-red rillet, and a girl of Kiomi's tribe leaned over the lazy water at half length, striking it with her handkerchief. At a distance of about twice a stone's-throw from the new carriage-road between Durstan and Bulsted, I fancied from old recollections she might be Kiomi herself. This was not the time for her people to be camping on Durstan. Besides, I feared it improbable that one would find her in any of the tracks of her people. The noise of the wheels brought the girl's face round to me. She was one of those who were babies in the tents when I was a boy. We were too far apart for me to read her features. I lay back in the carriage, thinking that it would have been better for my poor little wild friend if I had never crossed the shadow of her tents. A life caught out of its natural circle is as much in danger of being lost as a limb given to a wheel in spinning machinery, so it occurred to me, until I reflected that Prince Ernest might make the same remark, and deplore the damage done to the superior machinery likewise.

My movements appeared to interest the girl. She was up on a mound of the fast-purpling heath, shading her eyes to watch me, when I called at Bulsted lodge-gates to ask for a bed under Julia's roof that night. Her bare legs twinkled in a nimble pace on the way to Durstan Hall, as if she was determined to keep me in sight. I waved my hand to her. She stopped. A gipsy girl's figure is often as good an index to her mind as her face, and I perceived that she had not taken my greeting favourably; nor would she advance a step to my repeated beckonings; I tried hat, handkerchief, purse, in vain. My driver observed that she was taken with a fit of the obstinacy of "her lot." He shouted "Silver," and then "Fortune." She stood looking. The fellow discoursed on the nature of gipsies. Foxes were kept for hunting, he said; there was reason in that. Why we kept gipsies none could tell. He once backed a gipsy prize-fighter, who failed to keep his appointment. "Heart sunk too low below his belt, sir. You can't reckon on them for performances. And that same man afterwards fought the gamest fight in the chronicles o' the Ring! I knew he had it in him. But they're like nothing better than the weather; you can't put money on 'em and feel safe." Consequently he saw no good in them.

"She sticks to her post," he said, as we turned into the Durstan grounds. The girl was like a flag-staff on the upper line of heathland.

Heriot had promised to meet me at the station. His hostess signified, in the inimitable running half-sentences of her sex and class when bent upon explaining something to make it equal to nothing, that she had not let him go because it was as well that he should not go, on account of the state of his arm, lest the horses should take fright, in which case, or any

other, he would be totally helpless, and she, as his nurse, had exercised authority over her patient—one of the worst of patients—having reason to think it best to keep him under her eye. They were related, I learnt; subsequently I learnt that the match recently broken off was of Lady Maria's making. She just alluded to it under a French term. She came behind me in a newly-planted walk of evergreens, and called Heriot's name: I was very like him in figure, she said. Heriot was strolling, cigar in mouth, down one of the diminutive alleys of young fir in this upstart estate. He carried his right arm in a sling. I glanced at it once or twice: he affected to be prepossessed by the case between me and Edbury, and would say nothing of his own affairs, save that he meant to try for service in one of the Continental armies; he whose susceptible love for his country was almost a malady. But he had given himself to women: it was Cissy this, Trichy that, and the wiles of a Florence, the spites of an Agatha, duperies, innocent-seemings, witcheries, reptile-tricks of the fairest of women, all through his conversation. He had so saturated himself with the resources, evasions, and desperate cruising of these light creatures of wind, tide, and tempest, that, like one who has been gazing on the whirliground, he saw the whole of women running or only waiting for a suitable partner to run the giddy ring to perdition and an atoning pathos. He was still too young and healthy for more than a transient affectation of the cynical survey of their escapades. Pathos was imperiously called for at the close; it covered them over prettily, 'tucked them up,' as it were, for the final slumber: pathos was necessary, otherwise the ever-execrable husband appeared to triumph. Cissy is now the tall pale woman who is seen walking at a regular hour in the shade of the fashionable gardens, with a female attendant at her elbow and a strong man behind; she cannot pass a beggar. Isabella, still beautiful, nurses day and night her injured liege lord, the crusty incurable. That unvisited cottage by the Thames with the blinds down is the home of Georgina and the last child of her living three. To be just to him, Heriot brushed the pathos softly, and as if to escape from a sneer; but he could not have done well without it, for without it the tales of the ladies would have been rank fox-and-goose play, spider and fly; tales of rampant animalism decorated with jewellery and millinery and upholstery, and flavoured with idiocy. Now I can listen to a story of a fool and a woman, even when a husband intervenes, so long as the passion, apart from circumstances, continues respectable; that is, true to itself. Let the woman take herself off with her fool, and them make the best of it together; it is not impossible for them to do well, though it is hard. But I thank my training I behold the pair under no sentimental light when the husband is retained. I cut short one of Heriot's narratives by telling him that this picking bones of the dish was not to my taste. He twitted me with turning parson. The fretful feminine ocean incessantly tossing him had knocked the common sense out of him in whatsoever concerned women: he talked of me to Edbury shrewdly enough. I could not sit and listen to him when

he hinted that Julia Bulsted might have made another man of him. We had no very amicable five minutes after Lady Maria's departure from the dessert. One's duty is to warn a friend when there is danger of a rising disgust, and I spoke out. I spoke of Kiomi too. Heriot flushed, muttering, "The little devil!" with his usual contemplative relish of devilry. He did not open his mind to me, for he could only have done it by leading through sentimental innuendoes—the stuff he had taken to feed on. We parted, feeling that severe tension of the old links keeping us together which indicates the lack of new ones: a point where simple affection must bear the strain of friendship if it can. Heriot had promised to walk half-way with me to Bulsted, in spite of Lady Maria's childish fears of an attack on him. He was now satisfied with a good-bye at the hall-doors, and he talked ostentatiously of a method he had to bring Edbury up to the mark. I knew that same loud decreeing talk to be a method on his own behalf of concealing his sensitive resentment at the tone I had adopted, and I was comforted by the larger charity—so large that it embraced pitiful contempt—afforded to me by my insight. Lady Maria's carriage had gone to fetch her husband from a political dinner. My port-manteau advised me to wait for its return. Durstan and Riversley were at feud, however, owing to some powerful rude English used towards the proprietor of the former place by the squire; so I thought it better to let one of the grooms shoulder my luggage, and follow him. The night was dark; he chose the roadway, and I crossed the heath, meeting an exhilarating high wind that made my blood race. Egotism is not peculiar to any period of life; it is only especially curious in a young man beginning to match himself against his elders, for in him it suffuses the imagination; he is not merely selfishly sentient, or selfishly scheming: his very conceptions are selfish. I remember walking at my swiftest pace, blaming everybody I knew for insufficiency, for want of subordination to my interests, for poverty of nature, grossness, blindness to the fine lights shining in me; I blamed the fates for harassing me, circumstances for not surrounding me with friends worthy of me. Why had I not gone to one of our Universities, to have a wider choice of discriminating friends among the land's elect! I exacted as much compliance from men as from the earth I trod. The central I resembled the sun of this universe, with the difference that it shrieked for nourishment, instead of dispensing it. My monstrous conceit of elevation will not suffer condensation into sentences. What I can testify to is, that for making you bless the legs you stand on, a knock-down blow is a specific. I had it before I knew that a hand was up. I should have fancied that I had run athwart a tree, but for the recollection, as I was reeling to the ground, of a hulk of a fellow suddenly fronting me, and he did not hesitate with his fist. I went over and over into a heathery hollow. The wind sang shrill through the furzes; nothing was visible but black clumps, black cloud. Astonished though I was, and rather shaken, it flashed through me that this was not the attack of a highwayman. He calls upon you to stand and deliver: it is a foe that hits without warning.

The blow took me on the forehead, and might have been worse. Not seeing the enemy, curiosity was almost as strong in me as anger; but reflecting that I had injured no one I knew of, my nerves were quickly at the right pitch to retaliate. Brushing some spikes of furze off my hands, I prepared for it. A cry rose. My impressions seemed to be all backward, travelling up to me a moment or two behind time. I recognized a strange tongue in the cry, but too late that it was Romany to answer it. Instantly a voice was audible above the noisy wind:—"I spot him." Then began some good and fair fighting. I got my footing on grass, and liked the work. The fellow facing me was unmistakeably gipsy-build. I, too, had length of arm, and a disposition to use it by hitting straight out, with footing firm, instead of dodging and capering, which told in my favour, and is decidedly the best display of the noble art on a dark night. My dancer went over as neatly as I preceded him; and therewith I considered enough was done for vengeance. The thrill of a salmon on the gut is known to give a savage satisfaction to our original nature; it is but an extension and attenuation of the hearty contentment springing from a thorough delivery of the fist upon the prominent features of an assailant that yields to it perforce. Even when you receive such perfect blows you are half satisfied. Feeling conqueror, my wrath was soothed; I bent to have a look at my ruffian, and ask him what cause of complaint gipsies camping on Durstan could find against Riversley. A sharp stroke on the side of my neck sent me across his body. He bit viciously. In pain and desperation I flew at another of the tawny devils. They multiplied. I took to my heels; but this was the vainest of stratagems—they beat me in nimbleness. Four of them were round me when I wheeled, breathless, to take my chance at fighting the odds. Fiery men have not much notion of chivalry: gipsies the least of all. They yelled disdain of my summons to them to come on one by one: "Now they had caught me, now they would pay me, now they would pound me;" and, standing at four corners, they commended me to think of becoming a jelly. Four though they were, they kept their positions; they left it to me to rush in for a close; the hinder ones held out of arms' reach so long as I was disengaged. I had perpetually to shift my front, thinking—Oh, for a stick! any stout bit of timber! My fists ached, and a repetition of nasty dull knocks on back and neck, slogging thumps dealt by men getting to make sure of me, shattered my breathing. I cried out for a pause; I offered to take a couple of them at a time; I challenged three—the fourth to bide. I was now the dancer—left, right, and roundabout I had to swing, half-stunned, half-strangled with gorge. Those terrible blows in the back did the mischief. Sickness threatened to undermine me. Boxers know the severity of the flat-fisted stroke which a clever counterfeinting will sometimes fetch them in the unguarded bend of the back to win a rally with. Boxers have breathing-time: I had none. Stiff and sick, I tried to run; I tottered, I stood to be knocked down, I dropped like a log—careless of life. But I smelt earth keenly, and the damp grass and the devil's play of their feet

on my chin, chest, and thighs, revived a fit of wrath enough to set me staggering on my legs again. They permitted it, for the purpose of battering me further. I passed from down to up mechanically, and enjoyed the chestful of air given me in the interval of rising; thought of Germany, and my father, and Janet at her window, complacently; raised a child's voice in my throat for mercy, quite inaudible, and accepted my punishment. One idea I had was, that I could not possibly fail as a speaker after this—I wanted but a minute's grace to fetch breath for an oration, beginning, "You fools!" for I guessed that they had fallen upon the wrong man. Not a second was allowed. Soon the shrewd physical bracing, acting momentarily on my brain, relaxed; the fitful illumination ceased; all ideas faded out—clung about my beaten body—fled. The body might have been tossed into its grave, for aught I knew.

CHAPTER XLVII.

AMONG GIPSY WOMEN.

I CANNOT say how long it was after my senses had gone when I began to grope for them on the warmest of heaving soft pillows, and lost the slight hold I had on them with the effort. Then came a series of climbings and fallings, risings to the surface and sinkings fathoms below. Any attempt to speculate pitched me back into darkness. Gifted with a pair of enormous eyes, which threw surrounding objects to a distance of a mile away, I could not induce the diminutive things to approach; and shutting eyes led to such a rolling of mountains in my brain that, terrified by the gigantic revolution, I lay determinedly staring; clothed, it seemed positive, in a tight-fitting suit of sheet-lead; but why? I wondered why, and immediately received an extinguishing blow. My pillow was heavenly; I was constantly being cooled on it, and grew used to hear a croon no more musical than the unstopped reed above my head; a sound as of a breeze about a cavern's mouth, more soothing than a melody. Conjecture of my state, after hovering timidly in dread of relapses, settled and assured me I was lying baked, half-buried in an old river-bed; moss at my cheek, my body inextricable; water now and then feebly striving to float me out, with horrid pain, with infinite refreshingness. A shady light like the light through leafage, I could see; the water I felt. Why did it keep trying to move me? I questioned and sunk to the depths again.

The excruciated patient was having his wet bandages folded across his bruises, and could not bear a motion of the mind.

The mind's total solitude was the sign of recovering health. Kind nature put that district to sleep while she operated on the disquieted lower functions. I looked on my later self as one observes the mossy bearded substances travelling blind along the under-current of the stream, clinging to this and that, twirling absurdly.

Where was I? Not in a house. But for my condition of absolute calm, owing to skilful treatment, open air, and physical robustness, the scene would have been of a kind to scatter the busy little workmen setting up the fabric of my wits. A lighted oil-cup stood on a tripod in the middle of a tent-roof, and over it the creased neck and chin of a tall old woman, splendid in age, reddened vividly; her black eyes and grey brows, and greyish-black hair fell away in a dusk of their own. I thought her marvellous. Something she held in her hands that sent a thin steam between her and the light. Outside, in the A cutting of the tent's threshold, a heavy-coloured sunset hung upon dark land. My pillow meantime lifted me gently at a regular measure, and it was with untroubled wonder that I came to the knowledge of a human heart beating within it. So soft could only be feminine; so firm still young. The bosom was Kiomi's. A girl sidled at the opening of the tent, peeping in, and from a muffled rattle of subpectoral thunder discharged at her in quick, heated snaps, I knew Kiomi's voice. After an altercation of their monotonous gipsy undertones, the girl dropped and crouched outside.

It was morning when I woke next, stronger, and aching worse. I was lying in the air, and she who served for nurse, pillow, parasol, and bank of herbage, had her arms round beneath mine cherishingly, all the fingers outspread and flat on me, just as they had been when I went to sleep.

"Kiomi!"

"Now, you be quiet."

"Can I stand up a minute or two?"

"No, and you won't talk."

I submitted. This was our duel all day: she slipped from me only twice, and when she did the girl took her place.

I began to think of Bulsted and Riversley.

"Kiomi, how long have I been here?"

"You'll be twice as long as you've been."

"A couple of days?"

"More like a dozen."

"Just tell me what happened."

"Ghm—m—m," she growled admonishingly.

Reflecting on it, I felt sure there must have been searching parties over the heath.

"Kiomi, I say, how was it they missed me?"

She struck at once on my thought.

"They're fools."

"How did you cheat them?"

"I didn't tie a handkercher across their eyes."

"You half smothered me once, in the combe."

"You go to sleep."

"Have you been doctor?"

The growling tiger "Ghm—m—m" constrained me to take it for a lullaby.

"Kiomi, why the deuce did your people attack me?"

She repeated the sound resembling that which sometimes issues from the vent of a mine; but I insisted upon her answering.

"I'll put you down and be off," she threatened.

"Brute of a girl! I hate you!"

"Hate away."

"Tell me who found me."

"I shan't. You shut your peepers."

The other and younger girl sung out: "I found you."

Kiomi sent a volley at her.

"I did," said the girl; "yes, and I nursed you first, I did; and mother doctored you. Kiomi hasn't been here a day."

The old mother came out of the tent. She felt my pulse, and forthwith squatted in front of me. "You're hard to kill, and oily as a bean," said she. "You've only to lie quiet in the sun like a handsome gentleman; I'm sure you couldn't wish for more. Air and water's the doctor for such as you. You've got the bound in you to jump the ditch: don't you fret at it, or you'll lose your spring, my good gentleman."

"Leave off talking to me as a stranger," I bawled. "Out with it; why have you kept me here? Why did your men pitch into me?"

"Our men, my good gentleman!" the old woman ejaculated. There was innocence indeed! sufficient to pass the whole tribe before a bench of magistrates. She wheedled: "What have they against a handsome gentleman like you? They'd run for you fifty mile a day, and show you all their tricks and secrets for nothing."

My despot, Kiomi, fired invectives at her mother. The old mother retorted; the girl joined in. All three were scowling, flashing, showing teeth, driving the wordy javelin upon one another, indiscriminately, or two to one, without a pause; all to a sound like the slack silver string of the fiddle.

I sung out truce to them; they racked me with laughter; and such laughter!—the shaking of husks in a half-empty sack.

Ultimately, on a sudden cessation of the storm of tongues, they agreed that I must have my broth.

Sheer weariness, seasoned with some hope that the broth would give me strength to mount on my legs and walk, persuaded me to drink it. Still the old mother declared that none of her men would ever have laid hands on me. Why should they? she asked. What had I done to them? Was it their way?

Kiomi's arms tightened over my breast. The involuntary pressure was like an illumination to me.

No longer asking for the grounds of the attack on a mistaken person, and bowing to the fiction that none of the tribe had been among my assailants, I obtained information. The girl, Eveleen, had spied me entering Durstan. Quite by chance, she was concealed near Bulsted Park gates when the groom arrived and told the lodge-keeper that

Mr. Harry Richmond was coming up over the heath, and might have lost his way. "Richmond!" the girl threw a world of meaning into the unexpected name. Kiomi clutched me to her bosom, but no one breathed the name we had in our thoughts. Eveleen and the old mother had searched for me upon the heath, and having haled me head and foot to their tent, despatched a message to bring Kiomi down from London to aid them in their desperate shift. They knew Squire Beltham's temper. He would have scattered the tribe to the shores of the kingdom at a rumour of foul play to his grandson. Kiomi came in time to smuggle me through an inspection of the tent and cross-examination of its ostensible denizens by Captain Bulsted, who had no suspicions, though he was in a state of wonderment. Hearing all this, I was the first to say it would be better I should get out of the neighbourhood as soon as my legs should support me. The grin that goes for a laugh among gipsies followed my question of how Kiomi had managed to smuggle me. Eveleen was my informant when the dreaded Kiomi happened to be off duty for a minute. By a hasty transformation, due to a nightcap on the bandages about the head, and an old petticoat over my feet, Captain William's insensible friend was introduced to him as the sore sick great-grandmother of the tribe, mother of Kiomi's mother, aged ninety-one. The captain paid like a man for doctor and burial fees; he undertook, also, to send the old lady a pound of snuff to assist her to a last sneeze or two on the right side of the grave, and he kept his word; for, deeming it necessary to paint her in a characteristic, these prodigious serpents told him gravely that she delighted in snuff; it was almost the only thing that kept her alive, barring a sip of broth. Captain William's comment on the interesting piece of longevity whose well-covered length and framework lay exposed to his respectful contemplation, was, that she must have been a devilish fine old lady in her day. "Six foot" was given as her measurement. One pound of snuff, a bottle of rum, and five sovereigns, were the fruits of the captain's sensibility. I shattered my ribs with laughter over the story. Eveleen dwelt on the triumph, twinkling. Kiomi despised laughter or triumph resulting from the natural exercise of craft on an emergency. "But my handsome gentleman he won't tell on us, will he, when we've nursed him, and doctored him, and made him one of us, and as good a stick o' timber as grows in the forest?" whined the old mother. I had to swear I would not. "He!" cried Kiomi. "He may forget us when he's gone," the mother said. She would have liked me to kiss a book to seal the oath. Anxiety about the safety of their 'homes,' that is, the assurance of an untroubled reception upon their customary camping-grounds, is a peculiarity of the gipsies, distinguishing them, equally with their cleanliness and thriftiness, from mumpers and the common wanderers. It is their tribute to civilization, which generally keeps them within the laws. Who that does not know them will believe that under their domestic system I had the best broth and the best tea I have ever tasted! They are very cunning brewers, and sagacious buyers

too; their maxims show them to direct all their acuteness upon obtaining quality for their money. A compliment not backed by silver is hardly intelligible to the pretty ones: money is a really credible thing to them; and when they have it, they know how to use it. Apparently because they know so well, so perfectly appreciating it, they have only vague ideas of a corresponding sentiment on the opposite side to the bargain, and imagine that they fool people much more often than they succeed in doing. Once duped themselves, they are the wariest of the dog-burnt; the place is notched where it occurred, and for ever avoided. On the other hand, they repose implicit faith in a reputation vouched for by their experience. I was amused by the girl Eveleen's dotting of houses over the breadth of five counties, where for this and that article of apparel she designed to expend portions of a golden guinea, confident that she would get the very best, and a shilling besides. The unwonted coin gave her the joy of supposing she cheated the Mint of that sum. This guinea was a present to the girl (to whom I owed my thrashing, by the way) that excused itself under cover of being a bribe for sight of a mirror interdicted by the implacable Kiomi. I wanted to have a look at my face. Now that the familiar scenes were beginning to wear their original features to me, my dread of personal hideousness was distressing, though Eveleen declared the bad blood in my cheeks and eyes "had been sucked by pounds of red meat." I wondered whether, if I stood up and walked to either one of the three great halls lying in an obtuse triangle within view, I should easily be recognized. When I did see myself I groaned verily. With the silence of profound resignation, I handed back to Eveleen the curious fragment of her boudoir, which would have grimaced at Helen of Troy.

"You're feeling your nose—you've been looking at a glass!" Kiomi said with supernatural swiftness of deduction on her return.

She added for my comfort that nothing was broken, but confessed me to be still "a sight;" and thereupon drove knotty language at Eveleen. The girl retorted, and though these two would never acknowledge to me that any of their men had been in this neighbourhood recently, the fact was treated as a matter of course in their spiteful altercation, and each saddled the other with the mistake they had committed. Eveleen snatched the last word. What she said I did not comprehend, she must have hit hard. Kiomi's eyes lightened and her lips twitched; she coloured like the roofing smoke of the tent-fire; twice she showed her teeth, as in a spasm, struck to the heart, unable to speak, breathing in and out of a bitterly disjoined mouth. Eveleen ran. I guessed at the ill-word spoken. Kiomi sat eyeing the wood-ashes, a devouring gaze that shot straight and read but one thing. They who have seen wild creatures die will have her before them, saving the fiery eyes. She became an ashen-colour. I took her little hand. Unconscious of me, her brown fingers clutching at mine, she flung up her nostrils, craving air.

This was the picture of the woman who could not weep in her misery.

"Kiomi, old friend!" I called to her. I could have cursed that other friend, the son of mischief; for she, I could have sworn, had been fiercely and wantonly hunted. Chastity of nature, intense personal pride, were as proper to her as the free winds are to the heaths; they were as visible to dull divination as the milky blue about the iris of her eyeballs. She had actually no animal vileness, animal though she might be termed, and would have appeared if compared with Heriot's admirable Cissies and Gwennies, and other ladies of the Graces that run to fall, and spend their pains more in kindling the scent of the huntsman than in effectively flying.

There was no consolation for her. I thought of the old ballad of the slain knight and the corbies, when

"Down there came a fallow doe . . ."

She was nothing to me, and as little romantic a creature as could be, but her state was that of 'such a leman' whom every gentleman in evil case might pray for to cherish him: and she had nursed me on her bosom. I said the best I could think of. I doubt if she heard me.

The girl Eveleen came in sight, loitering and looking, kicking her idle heels.

Kiomi turned sharp round to me.

"I'm going. Your father's here, up at Bulsted. I'll see him. He won't tell. He'll come soon. You'll be fit to walk in a day. You're sound as a nail. Good-by—I shan't say good-by twice," she answered my attempt to keep her, and passed into the tent, out of which she brought a small bundle tied in a yellow handkerchief, and walked away without nodding or speaking.

"What was that you said to Kiomi?" I questioned Eveleen, who was quickly beside me.

She replied, accurately or not: "I told her our men'd give her as good as she gave me, let her wait and see."

To some chiding on my part, she rejoined: "Shall I take a slap in the face from one of mine because she's an aunt, and can't show herself all for walking off the line?" Therewith she pouted; or, to sketch her with precision, 'snouted' would better convey the vivacity of her ugly flash of features. It was an error in me to think her heartless. She talked of her aunt Kiomi affectionately for a gipsy girl, whose modulated tones are all addressed to the soft public; letting me at the same time understand that she thought their men right in making the tents uninhabitable to a rye guilty of spoiling the blood. Nevertheless it is the delicacy of the slipped woman which condemns her to be an outcast. Her women will receive her, though she often has to smart for it, as Eveleen worked on poor Kiomi's sensitiveness: and I fancy the men would come round by degrees, though they should smite and wither her at first. Eveleen spoke with the pride of bated breath of the ferocious unforgivingness of their men. Perhaps if she had known that I had traced

the good repute of the tribes for purity to the sweeter instincts of the women, she would have eulogized her sex to amuse me. Gipsy girls, like other people, are fond of showing off; but it would have been a victory of education to have helped her to feel the distinction of the feminine sense of shame half as awfully and warmly as she did the inscrutable iron despotism of the males. She hinted that the mistake of which I had been the victim would be rectified.

"Tell your men I'll hunt them down like rats if I hear of it," said I.

While we were conversing my father arrived. Eveleen, not knowing him, would have had me accept the friendly covering of a mat.

"Here's a big one! he's a clergyman," she muttered to herself, and ran to him and set up a gipsy whine, fronting me up to the last step while she advanced; she only yielded ground to my outcry.

My father bent over me. Kiomi had prepared him for what he saw. I quieted his alarm by talking currently and easily. Julia Bulsted had despatched a messenger to inform him of my mysterious disappearance; but he, as his way was, revelling in large conjectures, had half imagined me seized by a gust of passion, and bound for Germany. "Without my luggage?" I laughed. "Ay, without your luggage, Richie," he answered seriously. His conceit of a better knowledge of me than others possessed, had buoyed him up. "For I knew," he said, "we two do nothing like the herd of men. I thought you were off to her, my boy. Now!" he looked at me, and this look of dismay was a perfect mirror. I was not a presentable object.

He stretched his limbs on the heather and kept hold of my hand, looking and talking watchfully, doctor-like, doubting me to be as sound in body as I assured him I was, despite aches and pains. Eveleen hung near.

"These people have been kind to you?" he said.

"No, the biggest brutes on the earth," said I.

"Oh! you say that, when I spotted you out in the dark where you might have lied to be eaten, and carried you, and washed your bloody face, and watched you, and never slept, I didn't, to mother you and wet your head!" cried the girl.

My father beckoned to her and thanked her appreciably in the yellow tongue.

"So these scoundrels of the high-road fell upon you and robbed you, Richie?"

I nodded.

"You let him think they robbed you, and you had your purse to give me a gold guinea out of it!" Eveleen cried, and finding herself in the wrong track, volubly resumed: "That they didn't, for they hadn't time, whether they meant to, and the night black as a coal, whoever they were."

The mystery of my not having sent word to Bulsted or to Riversley perplexed my father.

"Comfortable here!" he echoed me, disconsolately, and glanced at the heath, the tent, the black circle of the broth-pot, and the wild girl.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MY FATHER ACTS THE CHARMER AGAIN.

Kiom's mother was seen in a turn of the gravel-cutting, bearing purchases from Durstan village. She took the new circumstances in with a single cast up of her wary eyelids; and her, and her skill in surgery and art in medicine, I praised to lull her fears, which procured me the denomination of old friend, as well as handsome gentleman; she went so far as to add, in a fit of natural warmth, nice fellow; and it is the truth that this term effected wonders in flattering me: it seemed to reveal to me how simple it was for Harry Richmond, one whom gipsies could think a nice fellow, to be the lord of Janet's affections—to be her husband. My heart throbbed; yet she was within range of a mile and a half, and I did not wish to be taken to her. I did wish to smell the piney air about the lake-palace; but the thought of Ottilia caused me no quick pulsations.

My father remained an hour. He could not perceive the drift of my objection to go either to Bulsted or to Riversley, and desire that my misadventure should be unknown at those places. However, he obeyed me, as I could always trust him to do scrupulously, and told a tale at Bulsted. In the afternoon he returned in a carriage to convey me to the seaside. When I was raised I fainted, and saw the last of the camp on Durstan much as I had come to it first. Sickness and swimming of the head continued for several days. I was persecuted with the sensation of the carriage journey, and an iteration of my father's that ran: "My son's inanimate body in my arms," or "Clasping the lifeless body of my sole son, Harry Richmond," and other variations. I said nothing about it. He told me aghast that I had spat blood. A battery of eight fists, having it in the end all its own way, leaves a deeper indentation on its target than a pistol-shot that passes free of the vital chords. My convalescence in Germany was a melody compared with this. I ought to have stopped in the tent, according to the wise old mother's advice, given sincerely, for prudence counselled her to strike her canvas and be gone. There I should have lain, interested in the progress of a bee, the course of a beetle or a cloud, a spider's business, and the shaking of the gorse and the heather, until good health had grown out of thoughtlessness. The very sight of my father was as a hive of humming troubles. His intense anxiety about me reflected in my mind the endless worry I had concerning him. It was the intellect which condemned him when he wore a joyful air, and the sensations when he waxed over-solicitous. Whether or not the sentences were just, the judges should have sometimes shifted places. I was unable to divine why he fevered me so much. Must I say it?—He had ceased to entertain me. Instead of a comic I found him a tragic spectacle; and his exuberant anticipations, his bursting hopes that fed their forcing-bed with the blight and decay of their predecessors, his transient fits of despair after a touch at my pulses, and exclamation of "Oh, Richie,

Richie, if only I had my boy up and well!"—assuming that nothing but my tardy recovery stood in the way of our contentment—were examples of downright unreason such as contemplation through the comic glass would have excused; the tragic could not. I knew, nevertheless, that to the rest of the world he was a progressive comedy; and the knowledge made him seem more tragic still. He clearly could not learn from misfortune; he was not to be contained. Money I gave him freely, holding the money at my disposal his own; I chafed at his unteachable spirit, surely one of the most tragical things in life; and the proof of my love for him was that I thought it so, though I should have been kinder had he amused me, as in the old days. Conceive to yourself the keeping watch over a fountain choked in its spouting, incessantly labouring to spirt a jet into the air; now for a moment glittering and towering in a column, and once more straining to mount. My father appeared to me in that and other images. He would have had me believe him shooting to his zenith, victorious at last. I likewise was to reap a victory of the highest kind from the attack of the mysterious ruffians; so much, he said, he thought he could assure me of. He chattered of an intimidated Government, and Dettermain and Newson; duchesses, dukes, most friendly; innumerable invitations to country castles; and among other things one which really showed him to be capable of conceiving ideas and working from an initiative. But this, too, though it accomplished a temporary service, he rendered illusory to me by his unhappy manner of regarding it as an instance of his now permanent social authority. He had instituted what he called his JURY OF HONOUR COURT, composed of the select gentlemen of the realm, ostensibly to weigh the causes of disputes between members of their class, and decree the method of settlement: but actually, my father admitted, to put a stop to the affair between Edbury and me. "That was the origin of the notion, Richie. I carried it on. I dined some of the best men of our day. I seized the opportunity when our choicest emperor was rolling on wheels to propound my system. I mention the names of Bramham DeWitt, Colonel Hibbert Segrave, Lord Alonzo Carr, Admiral Loftus, the Earl of Luton, the Marquis of Hatchford, Jack Hippony, Monterez Williams,—I think you know him?—and little Dick Phillimore, son of a big-wig, a fellow of a capital wit and discretion; I mention them as present to convince you we were not triflers, dear boy. My argument ran, it is absurd to fight; also it is intolerable to be compelled to submit to insult. As the case stands, we are under a summary edict of the citizens, to whom chivalry is unknown. Well, well, I delivered a short speech. Fighting, I said, resembled butting,—a performance proper to creatures that grow horns instead of brains . . . not to allude to a multitude of telling remarks; and the question 'Is man a fighting animal?' my answer being that he is not born with spurs on his heels or horns to his head: and that those who insisted on fighting should be examined by competent anatomists, 'ologists' of some sort, to decide whether they have the excrescences, and proclaim them . . . touching on these lighter parts of my

theme with extreme delicacy. But—and here I dwelt on my point: Man, if not a fighting animal in his glorious—I forget what—is a sensitive one, and has the idea of honour. ‘Hear,’ from Colonel Segrave, and Sir Weeton Slater—he was one of the party. In fine, Richie, I found myself wafted into a breathing oration. I cannot, I confess it humbly, hear your ‘hear, hear,’ without going up and off, inflated like a balloon. ‘Shall the arbitration of the magistracy, indemnifications in money awarded by the law-courts, succeed in satisfying,’—but I declare to you, Richie, it was no platform speech. I know your term—‘the chain-cable sentence.’ Nothing of the kind, I assure you. Plain sense, as from gentlemen to gentlemen. We require, I said, a protection that the polite world of Great Britain does not now afford us against the aggressions of the knave, the fool, and the brute. We establish a Court. We do hereby—no, no, not the ‘hereby;’ quite simply, Richie—pledge ourselves—I said some other word, not ‘pledge’—to use our utmost authority and influence to exclude from our circles persons refusing to make the reparation of an apology for wanton common insults: we renounce intercourse with men declining, when guilty of provoking the sentiment of hostility, to submit to the jurisdiction of our Court. All I want you to see is the notion. We raise the shield against the cowardly bully which the laws have raised against the bloody one. ‘And gentlemen,” my father resumed his oration, forgetting my sober eye for a minute—“Gentlemen, we are the ultimate Court of Appeal for men who cherish their honour, yet abstain from fastening it like a millstone round the neck of their common-sense.’ Credit me, Richie, the proposition kindled. We cited Lord Edbury to appear before us, and I tell you we extracted an ample apology to you from that young nobleman. And let me add, one that I, that we, must impose it upon an old son to accept. He does! Come, come. And you shall see, Richie, society shall never repose an inert mass under my leadership. I cure it; I shake it and cure it.”

He promenaded the room, repeating: “I do not say I am possessed of a panacea,” and bending to my chin as he passed; “I maintain that I can and do fulfil the duties of my station, which is my element, attained in the teeth of considerable difficulties, as no other man could, be he prince or premier minister. Not one,” he flourished, stepping onward. “And mind you, Richie, this,” he swung round, conscious as ever of the critic in me, though witless to correct his pomp of style, “this is not self-glorification. I point you facts. I have a thousand schemes—projects. I recognize the value of early misfortune. The particular misfortune of princes born is that they know nothing of the world—babies! I grant you, babies. Now I do. I have it on my thumb-nail. I know its wants. And just as I succeeded in making you a member of our Parliament in assembly, and the husband of an hereditary princess—hear me—so will I make good my original determination to be in myself the fountain of our social laws, and leader. I have never, I believe—to speak conscientiously—failed in a thing I have once determined on.”

The single wish that I might be a boy again, to find pleasure in his talk, was all that remained to combat the distaste I had for such oppressive deliveries of a mind apparently as little capable of being seated as a bladder charged with gas. I thanked him for getting rid of Edbury, and a touch of remorse pricked me, it is true, on his turning abruptly and saying: "You see me in my nakedness, Richie. To you and my valet, the heart, the body!" He was too sympathetic not to have a keen apprehension of a state of hostility in one whom he loved. If I had inclined to melt, however, his next remark would have been enough to harden me: "I have fought as many battles, and gained as startling victories as Napoleon Bonaparte; *he* was an upstart." The word gave me a jerk.

Sometimes he would indulge me transparently in a political controversy, confessing that my dialectical dexterity went far to make a Radical of him. I had no other amusement, or I should have held my peace. I tried every argument I could think of to prove to him that there was neither honour, nor dignity, nor profit in aiming at titular distinctions not forced upon us by the circumstances of our birth. He kept his position with much sly fencing, approaching shrewdness; and, whatever I might say, I could not deny that a vile old knock-knee'd world, tugging its forelock to the look of rank and chink of wealth, backed him, if he chose to be insensible to radical dignity. "In my time," said he, "all young gentlemen were born Tories. The doctor no more expected to see a Radical come into the world from a good family than a radish. But I discern you, my dear boy. Our reigning Families must now be active; they require the discipline I have undergone; and I, also, dine at aldermen's tables, and lay a foundation-stone—as Jorian says—with the facility of a hen-mother: *that* should not suffice them. 'Tis not sufficient for me. I lay my stone, eat my dinner, make my complimentary speech—and that is all that is expected of us; but I am fully aware we should do more. We must lead, or we are lost. Ay, and—to quote you—a Lord Mayor's barge is a pretty piece of gilt for the festive and luxurious to run up the river Thames in and mark their swans. I am convinced there is something deep in that. But what am I to do? Would you have me frown upon the people? Richie, it is prudent—I maintain it righteous, nay, it is, I affirm positively, sovereign wisdom—to cultivate every flower in the British bosom. Riposte me—have you too many? Say yes, and you pass my guard. You cannot. I fence you there. This British loyalty is, in my estimation, absolutely beautiful. We grow to a head in our old England. The people have an eye! I need no introduction to them. We reciprocate a highly cordial feeling when they line the streets and roads with respectful salutations, and I acknowledge their demonstrative good-will. These things make us a nation. By heaven, Richie, you are, on this occasion, if your dad may tell you so, wrong. I ask pardon for my bluntness; but I put it to you, could we, not travelling as personages in our well-beloved country, count on civility to greet us every-

where? Assuredly not. My position is, that by consenting to their honest enthusiasm, we—the identical effect you are perpetually crying out for—we civilize them, we civilize them. Goodness!—a Great Britain without Royalty!"

He launched on a series of desolate images. In the end, I was almost persuaded that he had an idea in his anxiety to cultivate the primary British sentiment.

We moved from town to town along the south coast; but it was vain to hope we might be taken for simple people. Nor was he altogether to blame, except in allowing the national instinct for 'worship and reverence' to air itself unrebuked. I fled to the island. Temple ran down to meet me there, and I heard that Janet had written to him for news of me. He entered our hotel a private person; when he passed out, hats flew off before him. The modest little fellow went along a double line of attentive observers on the pier, and came back, asking me in astonishment who he was supposed to be.

"I petitioned for privacy here!" exclaimed my father. It accounted for the mystery.

Temple knew my feelings, and did but glance at me.

Close upon Temple's arrival we had a strange couple of visitors. "Mistress Dolly Disher and her husband," my father introduced them. She called him by one of his Christian names inadvertently at times. The husband was a confectioner, a satisfied shade of a man, who reserved the exercise of his will for his business, we learnt; she, a bustling, fresh-faced woman of forty-five, with still expressive dark eyes, and, I guessed, the ideal remainder of a passion in her bosom. The guess was no great hazard. She was soon sitting beside me, telling me of the "years" she had known my father, and of the most affectionate friend and perfect gentleman he was: of the ladies who had been in love with him; "no wonder:" and of his sorrows and struggles, and his beautiful voice, and hearts that bled for him; and of one at least who prayed and trusted he would be successful at last. Temple and the pallid confectioner spent the day on board a yacht with my father. Mrs. Dolly stayed to nurse me and persuade me to swallow medicine. She talked of her youth, when, as a fashionable bootmaker's daughter, she permitted no bills to be sent in to Mr. Richmond, alleging, as a sufficient reason for it to her father, that their family came from Richmond in Yorkshire. Eventually, the bills were always paid. She had not been able to manage her husband so well; and the consequence was that (she breathed low) an execution was out; "though I tell him," she said tremulously, "he's sure to be paid in the long run, if only he'll wait. But no; he is you cannot think how obstinate in his business. And my girl Augusta waiting for Mr. Roy Richmond, the wish of our hearts! to assist at her wedding; and can we ask it, and have an execution hanging over him? And for all my husband's a guest here, he's as likely as not to set the officers at work, do what I will, to-morrow or any day. Your father invited us, Mr. Harry.

I forced my husband to come, hoping against hope ; for your papa gave the orders, relying on me, as he believed he might, and my husband undertook them, all through me. There it stops ; he hears reports, and he takes fright : in goes the bill ; then it's law, and last— Oh ! I'm ashamed."

Mr. Disher's bill was for supplying suppers to the Balls. He received my cheque for the amount in full, observing that he had been confident his wife was correct when she said it would be paid, but a tradesman's business was to hasten the day of payment ; and, for a penance, he himself would pacify the lawyers.

On hearing of the settlement of Mr. Disher's claim, my father ahem'd, speechless, which was a sign of his swallowing vexation. He remarked that I had, no doubt with the best intentions, encroached on his liberty. "I do not like to have my debts disturbed." He put it to me whether a man, carrying out a life-long plan, would not be disconcerted by the friendliest intervention. This payment to Disher he pronounced fatal in policy. "You have struck a heavy blow to my credit, Richie. Good little Mistress Dolly brought the man down here—no select addition to our society—and we were doing our utmost to endure him, as the ladies say, for the very purpose . . . but the error stands committed ! For the future, friend Disher will infallibly expect payments within the year. Credit for suppers is the guarantee of unlimited entertainments. And I was inspiring him with absolute confidence for next year's campaign. Money, you are aware, is no longer a question to terrify me. I hold proofs that I have conclusively frightened Government, and you know it. But this regards the manipulation of the man Disher. He will now dictate to me. A refresher of a few hundreds would have been impolitic to this kind of man ; but the entire sum ! and to a creditor in arms ! You reverse the proper situations of gentleman and tradesman. My supper-man, in particular, should be taught to understand that he is bound up in my success. Something frightened him ; he proceeded at law : and now we have shown him that he has frightened us. An execution ? My dear boy, I have danced an execution five years running, and ordered, consecutively, at the same house. Like other matters, an execution depends upon how you treat it. The odds are that we have mortally offended Mistress Dolly." He apologized for dwelling on the subject, with the plea that it was an essential part of his machinery of action, and the usual comparison of 'the sagacious general' whose forethought omitted no minutiae. I had to listen.

The lady professed to be hurt. The payment, however, put an end to the visit of this couple. Politic or not, it was a large sum to disburse, and once more my attention became fixed on the probable display of figures in my banker's book. Bonds and bills were falling due : the current expenses were exhausting. I tried to face the evil, and take a line of conduct, staggering, as I did on my feet. Had I been well enough, I believe I should have gone to my grandfather, to throw myself on his good-nature ; such was the brain's wise counsel : but I was all nerves and

alarms, insomuch that I interdicted Temple's writing to Janet, lest it should bring me on letters from my aunt Dorothy, full of advice that could no longer be followed, well-meant cautions, that might as well be addressed to the mile-posts behind me. Moreover, Janet would be flying on the wind to me, and I had a craving for soft arms and the look of her eyebrows that warned me to keep her off if I intended to act as became a man of good faith.

Fair weather, sunny green sea-water speckled with yachts shooting and bounding, and sending me the sharp sense of life there is in dashed-up fountains of silvery salt-spray, would have quickened my blood sooner but for this hot-bed of fruitless adventure, tricky precepts, and wisdom turned imp, in which my father had again planted me. To pity him seemed a childish affectation. His praise of my good looks pleased me, for on that point he was fitted to be a judge, and I was still fancying I had lost them on the heath. Troops of the satellites of his grand parade surrounded him. I saw him walk down the pier like one breaking up a levee. At times he appeared to me a commanding phantasm in the midst of phantasm figures of great ladies and their lords, whose names he told off on his return like a drover counting his herd; but within range of his eye and voice the reality of him grew overpowering. It seduced me, and, despite reason, I began to feel warm under his compliments. He was like wine. Gaiety sprang under his feet. Sitting at my window, I thirsted to see him when he was out of sight, and had touches of the passion of my boyhood. I listened credulously too, as in the old days, when he repeated, "You will find I am a magician, and very soon, Richie, mark me." His manner hinted that there was a surprise in store. "You have not been on the brink of the grave for nothing." He resembled wine in the other conditions attached to its rare qualities. O for the choice of having only a little of him, instead of having him on my heart! The unfilial wish attacked me frequently: he could be, and was, so ravishing to strangers and light acquaintances. Did by chance a likeness exist between us? My sick fancy rushed to the Belthams for a denial. There did, of some sort, I knew; and the thought partitioned my dreamy ideas, of which the noblest, taking advantage of my physical weakness, compelled me to confess that it was a vain delusion for one such as I to hope for Otilia. This looking at the roots of yourself, if you are possessed of a nobler half that will do it, is a sound corrective of an excessive ambition. Unfortunately it would seem that young men can do it only in sickness. With the use of my legs, and open-air breathing, I became compact, and as hungry and zealous on behalf of my individuality, as proud of it, as I had ever been; prouder and hungrier.

My first day of outing, when, looking at every face, I could reflect on the miraculous issue of mine almost clear from its pummelling, and above all, that my nose was safe—not stamped with the pugilist's brand—inspired a lyrical ebullition of gratitude. Who so intoxicated as the convalescent catching at health?

I met Charles Etherell on the pier, and heard that my parliamentary seat was considered in peril, together with a deal of gossip about my disappearance.

My father, who was growing markedly restless, on the watch for letters and new arrivals, started to pay Chippenden a flying visit. He begged me urgently to remain for another few days, while he gathered information, saying my presence at his chief quarters did him infinite service, and I always thought that possible. I should find he was a magician, he repeated, with a sort of hesitating fervour.

I had just waved my hand to him as the boat was bearing him away from the pier-head, when a feminine voice murmured in my ear, "Is not this our third meeting, Mr. Harry Richmond?—Venice, Elbestadt, and the Isle of Wight!" She ran on, allowing me time to recognize Clara Goodwin, "What was your last adventure? You have been ill. *Very* ill? Has it been serious?"

I made light of it. "No; a tumble."

"You look pale," she said quickly.

"That's from grieving at the loss of my beauty, Miss Goodwin."

"Have you really not been seriously ill?" she asked with an astonishing eagerness.

I told her mock-loftily that I did not believe in serious illnesses coming to godlike youth, and plied her in turn with inquiries.

"You have not been laid up in bed?" she persisted.

"No, on my honour, not in bed."

"Then," said she, "I would give much to be able to stop that boat."

She amazed me. "Why?"

"Because it's going on a bad errand," she replied.

"Miss Goodwin, you perplex me. My father has started in that boat."

"Yes, I saw him." She glanced hastily at the foam, in a way to show indifference. "What I am saying concerns others, . . . who have heard you were dangerously ill. I have sent for them to hasten across."

"My aunt and Miss Ilchester?"

"No."

"Who are they? Miss Goodwin, I'll answer any question. I've been queerish, that's true. Now let me hear who they are, when you arrived, when you expect them. Where are they now?"

"As to me," she responded with what stretched on my ears like an insufferable drawl, "I came over last night to hire a furnished house or lodgings. Papa has an appointment attached to the fortifications yonder. We'll leave the pier, if you please. You draw too much attention on ladies who venture to claim acquaintance with so important a gentleman."

We walked the whole length of the pier, chatting of our former meetings.

"Not here," she said, as soon as I began to question.

I was led further on, half expecting that the accessories of time and place would have to do with the revelation.

The bitter creature drew me at her heels into a linendraper's shop. There she took a seat, pitched her voice to the key of a lady's at a dinner-table, when speaking to her cavalier of the history or attire of some one present, and said, "You are sure the illness was not at all feigned?"

She had me as completely at her mercy in this detestable shop as if I were fixed in a witness-box.

"Feigned!" I exclaimed.

"That is no answer. And pray remember where you are."

"No, the illness was not feigned."

"And you have not made the most of it?"

"What an extraordinary thing to say!"

"That is no answer. And please do not imagine yourself under the necessity of acting every sentiment of your heart before these people."

She favoured a shopman with half-a-dozen directions.

"My answer is, then, that I have *not* made the most of it," I said.

"Not even by proxy?"

"Once more I'm adrift."

"You are certainly energetic. I must address you as a brother, or it will be supposed we are quarrelling. Harry, do you like that pattern?"

"Yes. What's the meaning of proxy?"

"With the accent you give it, Heaven only knows what it means. I would rather you did not talk here like a Frenchman relating his last love-affair in company. *Must* your voice escape control exactly at the indicatory words? Do you think your father made the most of it?"

"Of my illness? Oh! yes; the utmost. I should undoubtedly think so. That's his way."

"Why did you permit it?"

"I was what they call 'wandering' half the time. Besides, who could keep him in check? I rarely know what he is doing."

"You don't know what he wrote?"

"Wrote?"

"That you were dying."

"Of me? To whom?"

She scrutinized me, and rose from her chair. "I must try some other shop. How is it that, if these English people cannot make a 'berthe' fit to wear, they do not conceive the idea of importing such things from Paris? I will take your arm, Harry."

"You have bought nothing," I remarked.

"I have as much as I went for," she replied, and gravely thanked the assistant leaning on his thumbs across the counter; after which, dropping the graceless play of an enigma, she inquired whether I had forgotten the Frau von Dittmarsch.

I had, utterly; but not her maiden name of Sibley.

"Miss Goodwin, is she one of those who are coming to the island?"

"Frau von Dittmarsch? Yes. She takes an interest in you. She and I have been in correspondence ever since my visit to Sarkeld. It reminds me, you may vary my maiden name with the Christian, if you like. Harry, I believe you are truthful as ever, in spite——"

"Don't be unjust," said I.

"I wish I could think I was!" she rejoined. "Frau von Dittmarsch was at Sarkeld, and received terrible news of you. She called on me, at my father's residence over the water yonder, yesterday afternoon, desiring greatly to know—she is as cautious as one with a jewel in her custody—how it fared with you, whether you were actually in a dying state. I came here to learn; I have friends here: you were not alone, or I should have called on you. The rumour was that you were very ill; so I hired a furnished place for Frau von Dittmarsch at once. But when I saw you and him together, and the parting between you, I began to have fears; I should have countermanded the despatch I sent by the boat had it been possible."

"It has gone! And tell me the name of the other."

"Frau von Dittmarsch has a husband."

"Not with her now. Oh! cruel! speak: her name?"

"Her name, Harry? Her title is Countess von Delzenburg."

"Not princess?"

"Not in England."

Then Ottilia was here!

My father was indeed a magician!

Jane Austen.

"I DID not know that you were a studier of character," says Bingley to Elizabeth. "It must be an amusing study."

"Yes, but intricate characters are the most amusing. They have at least that advantage."

"The country," said Darcy, "can in general supply but few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society."

"But people themselves alter so much," Elizabeth answers, "that there is something new to be observed in them for ever."

"Yes, indeed," cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by Darcy's manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood, "I assure you that we have quite as much of *that* going on in the country as in town."

"Everybody was surprised, and Darcy, after looking at her for a moment, turned silently away. Mrs. Bennet, who fancied she had gained a complete victory over him, continued her triumph."

These people belong to a whole world of familiar acquaintances, who are, notwithstanding their old-fashioned dresses and quaint expressions, more alive to us than a great many of the people among whom we live. We know so much more about them to begin with. Notwithstanding a certain reticence and self-control which seems to belong to their age, and with all their quaint dresses, and ceremonies, and manners, the ladies and gentlemen in *Pride and Prejudice* and its companion novels seem like living people out of our own acquaintance transported bodily into a bygone age, represented in the half-dozen books that contain Jane Austen's works. Dear books! bright, sparkling with wit and animation, in which the homely heroines charm, the dull hours fly, and the very bores are enchanting.

Could we but study our own bores as Miss Austen must have studied hers in her country village, what a delightful world this might be!—a world of Norris's economical great walkers, with dining-room tables to dispose of; of Lady Bertrams on sofas, with their placid "Do not act anything improper, my dears; Sir Thomas would not like it;" of Bennets, Goddards, Bates's; of Mr. Collins's; of Rushbrooks, with two-and-forty speeches apiece—a world of Mrs. Eltons. . . . Inimitable woman! she must be alive at this very moment, if we but knew where to find her, her basket on her arm, her nods and all-importance, with Maple Grove and the Sucklings in the background. She would be much excited were she aware how highly she is said to be esteemed by the present Chancellor

of the Exchequer, who is well acquainted with Maple Grove and Selina too. It might console her for Mr. Knightly's shabby marriage.

All these people nearly start out of the pages, so natural and unaffected are they, and yet they never lived except in the imagination of one lady with bright eyes, who sat down some seventy years ago to an old mahogany desk in a quiet country parlour, and evoked them for us. Of her ways and belongings we read for the first time in this little memoir written half a century after her death. For the first time we seem to hear the echo of the voice, and to see the picture of the unknown friend who has charmed us so long—charmed away dull hours, created neighbours and companions for us in lonely places, and made harmless mirth. Some one said just now that many people seem to be so proud of seeing a joke at all, that they impress it upon you until you are perfectly wearied by it. Jane Austen was not of these; her humour flows gentle and spontaneous, it is no elaborate mechanism nor artificial fountain, but a bright natural little stream, rippling and trickling and sparkling every here and there in the sunshine. We should be surprised now-a-days to hear a young lady announce herself as a studier of character. From her quiet home in the country lane this one read to us a real page from the absorbing pathetic humorous book of human nature—a book that we can most of us understand when it is translated into plain English; but of which the quaint and illegible characters are often difficult to decipher for ourselves. It is a study which, with all respect for Darcy's opinion, must require something of country-like calm and concentration, and freedom of mind. It is difficult, for instance, for a too impulsive student not to attribute something of his own moods to his specimens instead of dispassionately contemplating them from a critical distance.

So we gladly welcome one more glimpse of an old friend come back with a last greeting. All those who love her name and her work, will prize this addition, small as it is, to their acquaintance with her. *Lady Susan* is a short story complete in itself. It is very unlike her later works in many respects, and scarcely equal to them, but the *Watsons* is a delightful fragment, which might belong to any of her other histories. It is bright with talk, and character, and animation. It is a story which is not *Emma*, and which is not *Pride and Prejudice*, but something between the two, and which was written—so the Preface tells us—some years before either of them was published. In this story vague shadows of future friends seem to be passing and repassing, conversing with each other, sitting down to cards, or “jogging along the muddy road” that led to D— in Surrey. The anteghosts, if such things exist, of a Mrs. Elton, of an Elizabeth Bennet, of a Darcy, meet us, only they are not ghosts at all, but very living people, with just so much resemblance to their successors as would be found no doubt between one generation and another. A cup of gruel is prepared for the master of the house: perhaps that very cup—“thin, but not too thin”—was destined in a different metem-

psychosis to immortality, at least such immortality as a cup of gruel might reasonably expect. Emma, sweet, intelligent, with an open countenance, and bright "lively" eyes, such as Miss Austen loved to give her heroines, comes home to live with her family, in consequence of the marriage of the aunt who had brought her up. She is to make her first appearance in the neighbourhood at the D—— ball, under the chaperonage of the Edwardses. "The Edwardses were people of fortune, who lived in the town, and kept their coach. The Watsons inhabited a village about three miles off, were poor, and had no close carriage; and ever since there had been balls in the place the former were accustomed to invite the latter to dine, dress and sleep at their home, on every monthly return throughout the winter." Elizabeth, the heroine's elder sister, "whose delight in a ball was not lessened by a ten years' enjoyment," had some merit in cheerfully undertaking to drive her and all her finery over in the old chair to D——.

As the sisters go along, the eldest describes the family with a good deal of frankness. Two sisters are away. There is the peevish Margaret, who is staying with her brother at Croydon, and the scheming Penelope, who has given up a great deal of time, to no purpose as yet, to a certain asthmatic old doctor at Chichester. Elizabeth proceeds to warn her young sister against the fascinations of a certain Tom Musgrave, who has trifled with all the family affections in turn. Then she comes to her brother Sam's hopeless devotion for Mary Edwards. "A young man must think of some one," says this philosophic Elizabeth, "and why should he not be as lucky as Robert, who has got a good wife and six thousand pounds?"

"We must not all expect to be individually lucky," replies Emma, with still truer philosophy. "The luck of one member of a family is luck to all."

"Mine is all to come," said Elizabeth, giving another sigh to the remembrance of Purvis. "I have been unlucky enough, and I cannot say much for you, as my aunt married again so foolishly. Well, you will have a good ball, I daresay. The next turning will bring us to the turnpike; you may see the church tower over the hedge, and the 'White Hart' is close by it. I shall long to know what you think of Tom Musgrave."

"Such were the last audible sounds of Miss Watson's voice before they passed through the turnpike gate, and entered on the pitching of the town, the grumbling and noise of which made further conversation most thoroughly undesirable. The old mare trotted heavily along, wanting no direction of the reins to take the right turn, and making only one blunder, in proposing to stop at the milliner's, before she drew up towards Mr. Edwards' door. Mr. Edwards lived in the best house in the street, and the best in the place, if Mr. Tomlinson, the banker, might be indulged in calling his newly erected house at the end of the town, with a shrubbery and a sweep, in the county."

"Mr. Edwards' house was higher than most of its neighbours, with

four windows on each side the door. The windows were guarded by posts and chains, and the door approached by a flight of stone steps."

Elizabeth thinks the Edwardses have "a noble house and live quite in style;" and on being admitted, they are received by the lady of the house of that day as well as her daughter—"a genteel-looking girl, with her hair in papers." The papers, however, are taken off in time for the ball. Then the carriages begin to drive up, and Emma and her new friends are introduced to the assembly-room.

In passing along a short gallery to the assembly-room, brilliant in lights before them, they had been accosted by a young man, "in a morning dress and boots," standing in the doorway of a bed-chamber, apparently on purpose to see them go by.

"Ah, Mrs. Edwards, how do you do? How do you do, Miss Edwards?" he cried, with an easy air. "You are determined to be in good time, I see, as usual. The candles are but this moment lit."

"I like to get a good seat by the fire, you know, Mr. Musgrave," replied Mrs. Edwards.

"I am this moment going to dress," said he. "I am waiting for my stupid fellow. We shall have a famous ball. The Osbornes are certainly coming. You may depend upon *that*, for I was with Lord Osborne this morning."

And in the course of the evening the party arrives from the Castle—Lord Osborne, his mother, his tutor Mr. Howard, and others of the party, ushered in by an obsequious landlord, and attended by Mr. Tom Musgrave.

Emma resents the family wrongs by a calm curtesy later in the evening, when she is fortunate enough to attract the hero's attention. Lord Osborne and his tutor also admire her; even Lady Osborne gives her a look of complacency. Before the end of the evening, the Osbornes and their train are on the move. Tom Musgrave will not remain after they have left, and announces his intention of "retreating to a remote corner of the house, ordering a barrel of oysters, and being famously snug." As he is seen no more, the authoress says we may suppose his plan to have succeeded, and may imagine him "mortifying with his barrel of oysters in dreary solitude, or gladly assisting the landlady in her bar to make fresh negus for the happy dancers above."

This is a happy touch, and completes the picture. Tom Musgrave, with his love of effect, his good looks, his flourishes, and his easinesses and uneasinesses, is a capital character. We might, perhaps, prosecute our studies on him in the present age, where, under some different name and in other circumstances, we have certainly met him at more than one house. Emma is very uncompromising, and allows him scant measure. "But you must have liked him," says Elizabeth; "you must have been struck with him altogether."

"I do *not* like him, Elizabeth. I allow his person and air to be good, and that his manners, to a certain point,—his address rather,—is pleasing. But I see nothing else to admire in him. On the contrary,

he seems very vain, very conceited, and absurdly anxious for distinction."

To which her surprised sister cries out, "My dearest Emma, you are like no one else."

Notwithstanding Emma's calm curtsey, both Lord Osborne and Tom Musgrave call upon her at Stanton, and one evening Tom Musgrave drops in unexpectedly upon the Watson party. The brother from Croydon is there with his bride, who certainly must have been first-cousin to Mrs. Elton and Mrs. Suckling of Maple Grove. Tom Musgrave loves to take people by surprise. He appears in the doorway in a traveller's wrap, "having come from London, and half a mile out of his road, merely to call for ten minutes at Stanton. In the present instance he had the additional motive of being able to tell the Miss Watsons, whom he depended on finding sitting quietly employed after tea, that he was going home to an eight-o'clock dinner."

To please Margaret, Miss Watson invites him for the following day.

"With the greatest pleasure," was the first reply. In a moment afterwards,—“That is, if I can possibly get here in time. I shoot with Lord Osborne, and therefore must not engage. You will not think of me unless you see me.” And so he departed, delighted in the uncertainty in which he had left them.

One can imagine what Miss Austen would have made of Tom Musgrave. But, indeed, the character is there complete, indicated in a few happy touches, and requiring no further amplification. A note at the end states that “when the author's sister, Cassandra, showed the manuscript of the work to some of her nieces, she also told them something of the intended story. Mr. Watson, for whom the original cup of gruel was made, was soon to die, and Emma to become dependent for a home on her sister-in-law and brother. She was to decline an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and finally to marry Mr. Howard, the tutor.

Emma Watson, and Tom Musgrave, and the whole town of D—— in Surrey belong, without a doubt, to the whole generation of Miss Austen's heroes and heroines. One would scarcely recognize Lady Susan's parentage if it were not so well authenticated. It must have been written early in life, when the author was still experimentalizing (as young authors, and alas! some old authors are apt to do) with other people's characters and creations, making them talk, walk, and rehearse the play, until the real actors come on the stage; and yet even this unpublished novelette possesses one special merit which gives so great a charm to Miss Austen's art. She has a gift of telling a story in a way that has never been surpassed. She rules her places, times, characters, and marshals them with unerring precision. Her machinery is simple but complete; events group themselves so vividly and naturally in her mind that, in describing imaginary scenes, we seem not only to read them, but to live them, to see the people coming and going: the gentlemen courteous and in top-boots, the ladies demure and piquant; we can almost hear

them talking to one another. No retrospects; no abrupt flights, as in real life: days and events follow one another. Last Tuesday does not suddenly start into existence all out of place; nor does 1790 appear upon the scene when we are well on in '21. Countries and continents do not fly from hero to hero, nor do long and divergent adventures happen to unimportant members of the company. With Miss Austen days, hours, minutes succeed each other like clock-work, one central figure is always present on the scene, that figure is always prepared for company. Miss Edwards' curl-papers are almost the only approach to dishabille in her stories. There are postchaises in readiness to convey the characters from Bath or Lyme to Uppercross, to Fullerton, from Gracechurch Street to Meryton, as their business takes them. Mr. Knightly rides from Brunswick Square to Hartfield, by a road that Miss Austen herself must have travelled in the curricule with her brother, driving to London on a summer's day. It was a wet ride for Mr. Knightly, followed by that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon in the shrubbery, when the wind had changed into a softer quarter, the clouds were carried off, and Emma, walking in the sunshine, with spirits freshened and thoughts a little relieved, and thinking of Mr. Knightly as sixteen miles off, meets him at the garden door; and everybody, I think, must be the happier, for the happiness that one half-hour gave to Emma and her "indifferent" lover.

There is a little extract from one of Miss Austen's letters to a niece, which shows that this was not chance, but careful workmanship.

"Your aunt C.," she says, "does not like desultory novels, and is rather fearful that yours will be too much so. That there will be too frequent a change from one set of people to another, and that circumstances will be sometimes introduced of apparent consequence, which will lead to nothing. It will not be so great an objection to me. I allow much more latitude than she does, and think nature and spirit cover many sins of a wandering story. . . ."

But, though the sins of a wandering story may be covered, the virtues of a well-told one make themselves felt unconsciously, and without an effort. Some books and people are delightful, we can scarce tell why; they are not so clever as others that weary and fatigue us. It is a certain effort to read a story, however touching, that is disconnected and badly related. It is like an ill-drawn picture, of which the colouring is good. Jane Austen possessed both gifts of colour and of drawing. She could see human nature as it was; with near-sighted eyes, it is true; but having seen, she could combine her picture by her art, and colour it from life.

In this special gift for organization she seems almost unequalled. Her picnics are models for all future and past picnics; her combinations of feelings, of gentlemen and ladies, are so natural and life-like that reading to criticize is impossible to some of us—the scene carries us away, and we forget to look for the art by which it is recorded. How delightful the people are who play at cards, and pay their addresses to one another, and sup, and discuss each other's affairs! Take Sir Walter Elliot compas-

sionating the navy and Admiral Baldwin—"nine grey hairs of a side, and nothing but a dab of powder at top—a wretched example of what a seafaring life can do, for men who are exposed to every climate and weather until they are not fit to be seen. It is a pity they are not knocked on the head at once, before they reach Admiral Baldwin's age. . . ."

The charm of friends of pen-and-ink is their unchangeableness. We go to them when we want them. We know where to seek them; we know what to expect from them. They are never preoccupied; they are always "at home;" they never turn their backs nor walk away as people do in real life, nor let their houses and leave the neighbourhood, and disappear for weeks together; they are never taken up with strange people, nor suddenly absorbed into some more genteel society, or by some nearer fancy. Even the most volatile among them is to be counted upon. We may have neglected them, and yet when we meet again there are the familiar old friends, and we seem to find our own old selves again in their company. For us time has, perhaps, passed away; feelings have swept by, leaving interests and recollections in their place, but at all ages there must be days that belong to our youth, hours that will recur so long as men forbear and women remember, and life itself exists. Perhaps the most fashionable marriage on the *tapis* no longer excites us very much, but the sentiment of an Emma or an Anne Elliot comes home to some of us as vividly as ever. It is something to have such old friends who are so young. An Emma, blooming, without a wrinkle or a grey hair, after twenty years' acquaintance (she was, in truth, sixty years old when we first knew her); an Elizabeth Bennet, sprightly and charming, at over eighty years of age. . . .

In the *Roundabout Papers* there is a passage about the pen and ink friends my father loved:—

"They used to call the good Sir Walter the 'Wizard of the North.' What if some writer should appear who can write so *enchantingly* that he shall be able to call into actual life the people whom he invents? What if Mignon, and Margaret, and Goetz von Berlichingen are alive now (though I don't say they are visible), and Dugald Dalgetty and Ivanhoe were to step in at that open window by the little garden yonder? Suppose Uncas and our noble old Leather Stocking were to glide in silent? Suppose Athos, Porthos, and Aramis should enter, with a noiseless swagger, curling their moustaches? And dearest Amelia Booth, on Uncle Toby's arm; and Tittlebat Titmouse with his hair dyed green; and all the Crummles company of comedians, with the Gil Blas troop; and Sir Roger de Coverley; and the greatest of all crazy gentlemen, the Knight of La Mancha, with his blessed squire? I say to you, I look rather wistfully towards the window, musing upon these people. Were any of them to enter, I think I should not be very much frightened. Dear old friends, what pleasant hours I have had with them! We do not see each other very often, but when we do we are ever happy to meet. . . ."

Are not such friends as these, and others unnamed here, but who will come unannounced to join the goodly company, creations that, like some people, do actually make part of our existence, and make us the better for theirs? To express some vague feelings is to stamp them. Have we any one of us a friend in a Knight of La Mancha, a Colonel Newcome, a Sir Roger de Coverley? They live for us even though they may have never lived. They are, and do actually make part of our lives, one of the best and noblest parts. To love them is like a direct communication with the great and generous minds that conceived them.

It is difficult, reading the novels of succeeding generations, to determine how much each book reflects of the time in which it was written; how much of its character depends upon the mind and the mood of the writer. The greatest minds, the most original, have the least stamp of the age, the most of that dominant natural reality which belongs to all great minds. We know how a landscape changes as the day goes on, and how the scene brightens and gains in beauty as the shadows begin to lengthen. The clearest eyes must see by the light of their own hour. Jane Austen's hour must have been a midday hour: bright, unsuggestive, with objects standing clear, without relief or shadow. She did not write of herself, but of the manners of her age. This age is essentially an age of men and women of strained emotion, little remains of starch, or powder, or courtly reserve. What we have lost in calm, in happiness, in tranquillity, we have gained in intensity. Our danger is now, not of expressing and feeling too little, but of expressing more than we feel.

There is certainly a wide difference between Miss Austen's ladies and, let us say, a Maggie Tulliver. One would be curious to know whether, between the human beings who read Jane Austen's books to-day and those who read them fifty years ago, there is as great a contrast. Have events happened within the last fifty years, feelings changed so rapidly as to turn many of the butterflies back into cocoons again, wrapping them round and round with self-involved, self-inflicted experiences, from which, perhaps, some higher form of moth might start in time, if such a metempsychosis were possible in natural history.

The living writers of to-day lead us into distant realms and worlds undreamt of in the placid and easily contented gigot age. People are gifted with wider experiences, with aspirations and emotions that were never more sincerely spoken than they are now; but, for actual study of character, there seems but little taste. A phase, a mood of mind, a sympathy, is what we look for, and what we chiefly find among the present novelists. There are leaders of the school to whom this criticism does not apply; and yet it would be no disrespect to George Eliot to say that we know more of her own generous sympathies and of the inner minds of her creations than of their outward expression, or to Mrs. Oliphant to remember more vividly what Zaidee and her sisters have felt than what they said. One reason may be, perhaps, that characters in novels are certainly

more intimate with us and on less ceremonious terms than in Miss Austen's days. Her heroines have a stamp of their own. They have a certain gentle self-respect and humour and hardness of heart in which modern heroines are a little wanting. Whatever happens they can for the most part speak of gaily and without bitterness. Love with them does not mean a passion so much as an interest—deep, silent; not quite incompatible with a secondary flirtation. Marianne Dashwood's tears are evidently meant to be dried. Jane Bennet smiles, sighs, and makes excuses for Bingley's neglect. Emma passes one disagreeable morning making up her mind to the unnatural alliance between Mr. Knightly and Harriet Smith. It was the spirit of the age, and, perhaps, one not to be unenvied. It was not that Jane Austen herself was incapable of understanding a deeper feeling. In the last written page of her last written book, there is an expression of the deepest and truest experience. Anne Elliot's talk with Captain Benfield is the touching utterance of a good woman's feelings. They are speaking of men and of women's affections. "You are always labouring and toiling," she says, "exposed to every risk and hardship. Your home, country, friends, all united; neither time nor life to be called your own. It would be too hard, indeed, (with a faltering voice,) if a woman's feelings were to be added to all this."

Farther on she says, eagerly: "I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those who resemble you. God forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures. I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No! I believe you capable of everything good and great in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important exertion, and to every domestic forbearance so long as—if I may be allowed the expression—so long as you have an object; I mean while the woman you love lives and lives for you. *All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not court it) is that of loving longest when existence or when hope is gone.*"

She could not immediately have uttered another sentence—her heart was too full, her breath too much oppressed.

Dear Anne Elliot!—sweet, impulsive, womanly, tender-hearted—one can almost hear her voice, pleading the cause of all true women. In those days when, perhaps, people's nerves were stronger than they are now, sentiment may have existed in a less degree, or have been more ruled by judgment, it may have been calmer and more matter-of-fact; and yet Jane Austen, at the very end of her life, wrote thus. Her words seem to ring in our ears after they have been spoken. Anne Elliot must have been Jane Austen herself, speaking for the last time. There is something so true, so womanly, about her, that it is impossible not to love her. She is the bright-eyed heroine of the earlier novels, matured, chastened, cultivated, to whom fidelity has brought only greater depth and sweetness instead of bitterness and pain.

What a difficult thing it would be to sit down and try to enumerate the

different influences by which our lives have been affected—influences of other lives, of art, of nature, of place and circumstance,—of beautiful sights passing before our eyes, or painful ones: seasons following in their course—hills rising on our horizons—scenes of ruin and desolation—crowded thoroughfares—sounds in our ears, jarring or harmonious—the voices of friends, calling, warning, encouraging—of preachers preaching—of people in the street below, complaining, and asking our pity. What long processions of human beings are passing before us! What trains of thought go sweeping through our brains! Man seems a strange and ill-kept record of many and bewildering experiences. Looking at oneself—not as oneself, but as an abstract human being—one is lost in wonder at the vast complexities which have been brought to bear upon it; lost in wonder, and in disappointment perhaps, at the discordant result of so great a harmony. Only we know that the whole diapason is beyond our grasp: one man cannot hear the note of the grasshoppers, another is deaf when the cannon sounds. Waiting among these many echoes and mysteries of every kind, and light and darkness, and life and death, we seize a note or two of the great symphony, and try to sing; and because these notes happen to jar, we think all is discordant hopelessness. Then come pressing onward in the crowd of life, voices with some of the notes that are wanting to our own part—voices tuned to the same key as our own, or to an accordant one; making harmony for us as they pass us by. Perhaps this is in life the happiest of all experience, and to few of us there exists any more complete ideal.

And so now and then in our lives, when we learn to love a sweet and noble character, we all feel happier and better for the goodness and charity which is not ours, and yet which seems to belong to us while we are near it. Just as some people and states of mind affect us uncomfortably, so we seem to be true to ourselves with a truthful person, generous-minded with a generous nature; life seems less disappointing and self-seeking when we think of the just and sweet and unselfish spirits, moving untroubled among dinning and distracting influence. These are our friends in the best and noblest sense. We are the happier for their existence,—it is so much gain to us. They may have lived at some distant time, we may never have met face to face, or we may have known them and been blessed by their love; but their light shines from afar, their life is for us and with us in its generous example; their song is for our ears, and we hear it and love it still, though the singer may be lying dead.

Some women should raise and ennoble all those who follow after,—true, gentle and strong and tender, whom “to love is a liberal education,” whom to have known is a blessing in our past. Is not the cry of the children still ringing in our ears as when the poet first uttered her noble song?

This little book, which has come out within the last few months, tells with a touching directness and simplicity the story of a good and

gifted woman, whose name has long been a household word among us, but of whose history nothing was known until this little volume appeared. It only tells the story of a country lady, of days following days tranquilly, of common events; and yet the history is deeply interesting to those who loved the writer of whom it is written; and as we turn from the story of Jane Austen's life to her books again, we feel more than ever that she, too, was one of these true friends who belong to us inalienably—simple, wise, contented, living in others, one of those whom we seem to have a right to love. Such people belong to all human-kind by the very right of their wide and generous sympathies, of their gentle wisdom and loveableness. Jane Austen's life, as it is told by her nephew, is very touching, sweet, and peaceful. It is a country landscape, where the cattle are grazing, the boughs of the great elm-tree rocking in the wind: sometimes, as we read, they come falling with a crash into the sweep; birds are flying about the old house, homely in its simple rule. The rafters cross the whitewashed ceilings, the beams project into the room below. We can see it all: the parlour with the horsehair sofa, the scant, quaint furniture, the old-fashioned garden outside, with its flowers and vegetables combined, and along the south side of the garden the green terrace sloping away.

One may read the account of Catherine Morland's home with new interest, from the hint which is given of its likeness to the old house at Steventon, where dwelt the unknown friend whose voice we seem to hear at last, and whose face we seem to recognize, her bright eyes and brown curly hair, her quick and graceful figure. One can picture the children who are playing at the door of the old parsonage, and calling for Aunt Jane. One can imagine her pretty ways with them, her sympathy for the active, their games and imaginations. There is Cassandra. She is older than her sister, more critical, more beautiful, more reserved. There is the mother of the family, with her keen wit and clear mind; the handsome father—"the handsome proctor," as he was called; the five brothers, and the cousins driving up the lane. Tranquil summer passes by, the winter days go by; the young lady still sits writing at the old mahogany desk, and smiling, perhaps, at her own fancies, and hiding them away with her papers at the sound of coming steps. Now, the modest papers, printed and reprinted, lie in every hand, the fancies disport themselves at their will in the wisest brains and the most foolish.

It must have been at Steventon—Jane Austen's earliest home—that Mr. Collins first made his appearance (Lady Catherine not objecting, as we know, to his occasional absence on a Sunday, provided another clergyman was engaged to do the duty of the day), and here, conversing with Miss Jane, that he must have made many of his profoundest observations upon human nature; remarking, among other things, that resignation is never so perfect as when the blessing denied begins to lose somewhat of its value in our estimation, and propounding his celebrated theory about the usual practice of elegant females. It must have been here, too, that

poor Mrs. Bennet declared, with some justice, that once estates are entailed, one can never tell how they will go; that Mrs. Allen's sprigged muslin and John Thorpe's rodomontades were woven; that his gig was built, "carriage-hung lamps, seat, trunk, sword-case, splashboard, silver moulding, all, you see, complete. The ironwork as good as new, or better. He asked fifty guineas. . . . I closed with him directly, threw down the money, and the carriage was mine."

"And I am sure," said Catherine, "I know so little of such things, that I cannot judge whether it was cheap or dear."

"Neither the one nor the other," says John Thorpe.

Mrs. Palmer was also born at Steventon—the good-humoured lady in *Sense and Sensibility*, who thinks it so ridiculous that her husband never hears her when she speaks to him. We are told that Marianne and Elinor have been supposed to represent Cassandra and Jane Austen; but Mr. Austen Leigh says that he can trace no resemblance. Jane Austen is not twenty when this book is written, and only twenty-one when *Pride and Prejudice* is first devised. There is a pretty description of the sisters' devotion to one another; of the family party; of the old place where Jane Austen spends the first five-and-twenty years of her life—Steventon, where there are hedgerows winding, with green shady footpaths within the copse; where the earliest primroses and hyacinths are found. There is the wood-walk, with its rustic seats, leading to the meadows; the church-walk leading to the church, "which is far from the hum of the village, and within sight of no habitation, except a glimpse of the grey manor-house through its circling screen of sycamores. Sweet violets, both purple and white, grow in abundance beneath its south wall. Large elms protrude their rough branches, old hawthorns shed their blossoms over the graves, and the hollow yew-tree must be at least coeval with the church."

Cousins, as I have said, come on the scene—a young, widowed Comtesse de Feuillade, flying from the Revolution to her uncle's home. She is described as a clever and accomplished woman, interested in her young cousins, teaching them French (both Jane and Cassandra knew French), helping in their various schemes, in their theatricals in the barn. She eventually marries her cousin, Henry Austen. The simple family annals are not without their romance; but there is a cruel one for poor Cassandra, whose lover dies abroad, and his death saddens the whole family-party. Jane, too, "receives the addresses" (do such things as addresses exist nowadays?) "of a gentleman possessed of good character and fortune, and of everything, in short, except the subtle power of touching her heart." One cannot help wondering whether this was a Henry Crawford or an Elton or a Mr. Elliot, or had Jane already seen the person that even Cassandra thought good enough for her sister?

Here, too, is another sorrowful story. The sisters' fate (there is a sad coincidence and similarity in it) was to be undivided; their life, their experience was the same. Some one without a name takes leave of Jane

one day, promising to come back. He never comes back: they hear of his death. The story seems even sadder than Cassandra's in its silence and uncertainty, for silence and uncertainty are death in life to some people. . . . And yet to Jane Austen there can have been no death in life. Her sunny temper and loving heart, even though saddened, must have reflected all the love and all the sunshine in her way.

There is little trace of such a story in Jane Austen's books—not one morbid word is to be found, not one vain regret. Hers was not a nature to fall crushed by the overthrow of one phase of her manifold life. Hers seems to have been a natural genius for life, if I may so speak; too vivid and genuinely unselfish to fail her in her need. She could gather every flower, every brightness along her road. Good spirit, content, all the interests of a happy and observant nature were hers. Her gentle humour and wit and interest cannot have failed.

It is impossible to calculate the difference of the grasp by which one or another human being realizes existence and the things relating to it, nor how much more vivid life seems to some than to others. Jane Austen, while her life lasted, realized it, and made the best use of the gifts that were hers. Yet, when her life was ending, then it was given to her to realize the change that was at hand; and as willingly as she had lived, she died. Some people seem scarcely to rise up to their own work, to their own ideal. Jane Austen's life, as it is told by her nephew, is beyond her work, which only contained one phase of that sweet and wise nature—the creative, observant, outward phase. For her home, for her sister, for her friends, she kept the depth and tenderness of her bright and gentle sympathy. She is described as busy with her neat and clever fingers sewing for the poor, working fanciful keepsakes for her friends. There is the cup and ball that she never failed to catch; the spillikens lie in an even ring where she has thrown them; there are her letters, straightly and neatly folded, and fitting smoothly in their creases. There is something sweet, orderly, and consistent in her character and all her tastes—in her fondness for Crabbe and Cowper, in her little joke that she ought to be a Mrs. Crabbe. She sings of an evening old ballads to old-fashioned tunes with a low sweet voice.

Further on we have a glimpse of Jane and her sister in their mobcaps, young still, but dressed soberly beyond their years. One can imagine "Aunt Jane," with her brother's children round her knee, telling her delightful stories or listening to theirs, with never-failing sympathy. One can fancy Cassandra, who does not like desultory novels, more prudent and more reserved, and somewhat less of a playfellow, looking down upon the group with elder sister's eyes.

Here is an extract from a letter written at Steventon in 1800. The vision seems to speak as one reads the old letters quaint with the accent of near a century ago:

"I have two messages: let me get rid of them, and then my paper

will be my own. Mary fully intended writing by Mr. Charles's frank, and only happened entirely to forget it, but will write soon; and my father wishes Edward to send him a memorandum of the price of hops.

"Sunday evening.

"We have had a dreadful storm of wind in the forepart of the day, which has done a great deal of mischief among our trees. I was sitting alone in the drawing-room when an odd kind of crash startled me. In a moment afterwards it was repeated. I then went to the window. I reached it just in time to see the last of our two highly valued elms descend into the sweep!!!

"The other, which had fallen, I suppose, in the first crash, and which was nearest to the pond, taking a more easterly direction, sank among our screen of chestnuts and firs, knocking down one spruce-fir, breaking off the head of another, and stripping the two corner chestnuts of several branches in its fall. This is not all: the maple bearing the weathercock was broke in two, and what I regret more than all the rest is, that all the three elms that grew in Hall's Meadow, and gave such ornament to it, are gone."

A certain Mrs. Stent comes into one of these letters "ejaculating some wonder about the cocks and hens." Mrs. Stent seems to have tried their patience, and will be known henceforward as having bored Jane Austen.

They leave Steventon when Jane is about twenty-five years of age and go to Bath, from whence a couple of pleasant letters are given us. Jane is writing to her sister. She has visited Miss A., who, like all other young ladies, is considerably genteeler than her parents. She is heartily glad that Cassandra speaks so comfortably of her health and looks: could travelling fifty miles produce such an immediate change? "You were looking poorly when you were here, and everybody seemed sensible of it." Is there any charm in a hack postchaise? But if there were, Mrs. Craven's carriage might have undone it all. Here Mrs. Stent appears again. "Poor Mrs. Stent, it has been her lot to be always in the way; but we must be merciful, for perhaps in time we may come to be Mrs. Stents ourselves, unequal to anything and unwelcome to everybody." Elsewhere she writes, upon Mrs. —'s mentioning that she had sent the *Rejected Addresses* to Mr. H., "I began talking to her a little about them, and expressed my hope of their having amused her. Her answer was, 'Oh dear, yes, very much; very droll indeed; the opening of the house and the striking up of the fiddles!' What she meant, poor woman, who shall say?"

But there is no malice in Jane Austen. Hers is the charity of all clear minds, it is only the muddled who are intolerant. All who love Emma and Mr. Knightly must remember the touching little scene in which he reproves her for her thoughtless impatience of poor Miss Bates's volubility.

"You, whom she had known from an infant, whom she had seen grow up from a period when her notice was an honour, to have you now, in thoughtless spirits and in the pride of the moment, laugh at her, humble her . . . This is not pleasant to you, Emma, and it is very far from pleasant to me, but I must, I will, I will tell you truths while I am satisfied with proving myself your friend by very faithful counsel, and trusting that you will some time or other do me greater justice than you can do me now."

"While they talked they were advancing towards the carriage: it was ready, and before she could speak again he had handed her in. He had misinterpreted the feeling which kept her face averted and her tongue motionless." Mr. Knightly's little sermon, in its old-fashioned English, is as applicable now as it was when it was spoken. . . . How alive they all are; with what grace and spirit they play their parts—all these people who were modestly put away for so many years.

Mr. Austen died at Bath, and his family removed to Southampton. In 1811, Mrs. Austen, her daughters, and her niece, settled finally at Chawton, a house belonging to Jane's brother, Mr. Knight (he is adopted by an uncle, whose name he takes), and from Chawton all her literary work was given to the world. *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, were already written; but in the next five years, from thirty-five to forty, she set to work seriously, and wrote *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. Any one who has written a book will know what an amount of labour this represents. . . . One can picture to oneself the little family scene which Jane describes to Cassandra. *Pride and Prejudice* just come down in a parcel from town; the unsuspicious Miss B. to dinner; and Jane and her mother setting in the evening and reading aloud half the first volume of a new novel sent down by the brother. Unsuspicious Miss B. is delighted. Jane complains of her mother's too rapid way of getting on; "though she perfectly understands the characters herself, she cannot speak as they ought. Upon the whole, however," she says, "I am quite vain enough and well-satisfied enough." This is her own criticism of *Pride and Prejudice*:—"The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling. It wants shade. It wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense about something unconnected with the story—an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott or the *History of Bonaparte*."

And so Jane Austen lives quietly working at her labour of love, interested in her "own darling children's" success; "the light of the home," one of the real living children says afterwards, speaking in the days when she was no longer there. She goes to London once or twice. Once she lives for some months in Hans Place, nursing a brother through an illness. Here it was that she received some little compliments and messages from the Prince Regent, and some valuable suggestions from Mr. Clarke, his librarian, respecting a very remarkable clergyman. He is anxious that she should delineate one who "should pass his time between the metropolis

and the country, something like Beattie's minstrel, entirely engaged in literature, and no man's enemy but his own." Failing to impress this character upon the authoress, he makes a different suggestion, and proposes that she should write a romance illustrative of the august house of Coburg. "It would be interesting," he says, "and very properly dedicated to Prince Leopold."

To which Miss Austen replies: "I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not seriously sit down to write a romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before the first chapter."

There is a delightful collection of friends' suggestions which she has put together, but which is too long to be quoted here. She calls it, "Plan of a Novel, as suggested by various Friends."

All this time, while her fame is slowly growing, life passes in the same way in the old cottage at Chawton. Aunt Jane, with her young face and her mob-cap, makes play-houses for the children, helps them to dress up, invents imaginary conversations for them, supposing that they are all grown up the day after a ball. One can imagine how delightful a game that must have seemed to the little girls. She built her nest, did this good woman, happily weaving it out of shreds, and ends, and scraps of daily duty, patiently put together; and it was from this nest that she sang the song, bright and brilliant, with quaint thrills and unexpected cadences, that reaches us even here through fifty years. The lesson her life seems to teach us is this: Don't let us despise our nests—life is as much made of minutes as of years; let us complete the daily duties; let us patiently gather the twigs and the little scraps of moss, of dried grass together; and see the result!—a whole, completed and coherent, beautiful even without the song.

We come too soon to the story of her death. And yet did it come too soon? A sweet life is not the sweeter for being long. Jane Austen lived years enough to fulfil her mission. It was an unconscious one; and unconscious teachers are the highest. They teach by their lives, even more than by their words, and their lives need not reach threescore years and ten to be complete. She lived long enough to write six books that were masterpieces in their way—to make a thousand people the happier for her industry. She lived long enough to be loved by all those of her home.

One cannot read the story of her latter days without emotion; of her patience, her sweetness, and gratitude. There is family trouble, we are not told of what nature. She falls ill. Her nieces find her in her dressing-gown, like an invalid, in an arm-chair in her bed-room; but she gets up and greets them, and, pointing to seats which had been arranged for them by the fire, says: "There is a chair for the married lady, and a little stool for you, Caroline." But she is too weak to talk, and Cassandra takes them away.

At last they persuade her to go to Winchester, to a well-known doctor there.

"It distressed me," she says, in one of her last, dying letters, "to see Uncle Henry."

"And William Knight, who kindly attended us, riding in the rain almost the whole way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night; and on Thursday, which is a confirmation and a holiday, we hope to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit from *him*, poor fellow, as he is in the sick room. . . . God bless you, dear E., if ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. . . ."

But nursing does not cure her, nor can the doctor save her to them all, and she sinks from day to day. To the end she is full of concern for others.

"As for my dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse has not been made ill by her exertions," she writes. "As to what I owe her, and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it, and pray God to bless them more and more."

One can hardly read this last sentence with dry eyes. It is her parting blessing and farewell to those she had blessed all her life by her presence and her love. Thank God that love is beyond death; and its benediction, still with us, not only spoken in words, but by the signs and the love of a lifetime, that does not end for us as long as we ourselves exist.

They asked her when she was near her end if there was anything she wanted.

"Nothing but death," she said. Those were her last words. She died on the 18th of July, 1817, and was buried in Winchester Cathedral, where she lies not unremembered.

A. I. T.

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Consule Julio :

AN EPISODE UNDER THE COMMUNE DE PARIS.

I.

SOME ten years ago, when people asked Monsieur Torreau, of the Rue Quincampoix, Paris, what he thought of doing with his son Jules, who was then a lanky youth, with trowsers too short for him, M. Torreau used to answer, in a tone of voice and with a toss of the head such as could only have come from a retired hatter who had got "dix milles livres de rente," that Jules was destined to become a Government functionary. And you should have heard the stress he laid upon that word FUNCTIONARY! Young Jules insensibly loomed upon the imagination of the listener attired in golden swallow-tails, with a red ribbon round his throat, a touch of lumbago, a pair of spectacles over his eyes, and a roll of administrative parchment under his arm. I think it was a secret chagrin to both the worthy people, M. and M^{me}. Torreau, that their son was such a long time getting bald. They looked with tender impatience to the day when his head, denuded of its hirsute forest, should shine like a new-laid egg, when his girth should round itself into the decorous shapeliness of a pumpkin, and when he should reap his visage every morning, leaving nought but moustache and "imperial" to denote that he was a man in authority, holding Bonapartist convictions, and enjoying a salary out of the public taxes. Alas! best of parents, what would you have said had it been predicted to you that your offspring, Jules, would climb the steepes of power with a poll as shaggy as the uncombed mane of a lion, a beard flaming out to a foot's length on either side of his countenance, and the word "Republican" indelibly stamped on every part of his person and apparel—on his finger-nails, on the ragged cuffs and greasy collar of his coat, on the furious-looking brim of his wideawake hat? Ah me! But let us not anticipate.

Young Jules was a good lad, and would have made a blameless hatter; but his father, with a restless eye to his future greatness, had sent him early to the Lycée Bonaparte, which was a mistake, for the Lycée Bonaparte in the Chaussée d'Antin was the most official and aristocratic of all the public schools; and when it became known there that young Jules was the son of "TORREAU, inventor of the Simili-Panama, warranted to stand all weathers. Price fifty sous. Beware of spurious imitations," the joke was thought too good a one to be lost, and all the aristocratic young heads of "Bonaparte" blossomed out with simili-panamas, bought with hoarded pocket-money, and indulged in criticisms on the badness of this

head-dress, in the hearing of young Jules, and with the kind intention of making him foam at the mouth. But it must be recorded that young Jules revenged himself with spirit. When the thing had gone far enough, he flattened his fist on the nose of a senator's son so vigorously as to keep that young gentleman for two-and-twenty days on the sick-list; with his boot he drove the heir of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary rolling amidst a heap of plates; and, armed with a simili-panama, he collared the rising hope of a Councillor of State, and made a furious, though happily ineffectual, attempt to force the obnoxious covering down his throat. After which, having established his physical supremacy, he exclaimed, with his teeth set, "And now I'll tell you what the son of a hatter can do," and from that day forth won all the school-prizes—all, without exception. At the annual solemnities, when the rewards were distributed before a concourse of friends and distinguished visitors, it was invariably young Torreau's name that headed the roll; and in the last year of his academic career, when he took part in the Concours Général, which is a competition of all the public schools in Paris, he carried the "Prize of Honour,"—that for Latin Essay,—and enjoyed the triumph of being cheered to the echo by his old antagonists, who, proud of the lustre he was shedding on their school, shouted rapturously, "Vive Torreau!" and set up a hurricane of applause as, flushed and nervous amidst a vast assembly of spectators risen to their feet to do him honour, he descended from the dais where he had received his crown of gilt laurel-leaves and his two thousand francs' worth of books from the Minister of Public Instruction.

I promise you that was a fine day for the Torreau connection. The excellent Madame Torreau wept a pocket-handkerchief-full of tears; the face of Torreau senior looked like a freshly-cooked lobster; and pretty Mdlle. Victorine Torreau, known in the Quartier Quincampoix as the future possessor of "cent mille livres de dot," was as pink with pleasure and as moist about the eyes as though she had been suffered to marry poor Celestin Joubarbe, her father's ex-apprentice, who had dared to aspire to her hand, and been ignominiously forbidden the house in consequence. But the climax was reached when, according to traditional usage, young Jules set out at six o'clock in the evening to dine with his Excellency the Minister at the latter's official residence. It was an event never to be forgotten in the Rue Quincampoix. Mdlle. Torreau had bought Jules a gold watch and dazzling chain; Mdlle. Victorine had hemmed him a dozen white cravats; an uncle in the tailoring way had cut him a dress-suit out of the most glossy cloth of Elbœuf; and a second uncle, erst partner of Torreau senior, but now carrying on the simili-panama trade by himself, had presented him with a new opera-hat, patented, self-expanding, and costing twenty-five francs. In all of which splendours, and with his head as firmly imbedded in the starched folds of one of the cravats aforesaid as if it had been screwed there, young Jules burst upon the awe-stricken sight of his cabman and of the entire neighbourhood congre-

gated on their doorsteps to see him off. As for Torreau senior, beside himself with contentment, he spent the evening in regaling his good friend Bastien Potachaux, ex-hosier and glover (whose son had won no prize), with the story of what advantages were attached to the Prix d'Honneur. And, truth to say, these advantages almost constituted a fortune. Thus, Jules would be exempted from military service. If he elected to enter the Bar, he would be dispensed from paying fees. If he chose to become a Professor, the Ecole Normale was open to him. Or, if he thought of turning Engineer or Artillery officer, he was privileged to step straight into the Ecole Polytechnique without passing the usual examinations. "And he will adopt the latter course," concluded Torreau senior, slapping the thigh of Bastien Potachaux, who listened with that natural enthusiasm we always evince at hearing that our friends' children have earned honours which our own have been unable to obtain. "He will join the Polytechnic School next October, become a Government engineer; and then, my old friend, one of these days, when you and I have got no teeth left in our heads, we shall see him Minister of Public Works, or perhaps—who knows?—Prime Minister." Thus Torreau senior, in the exuberance of his heart; and the words were fulfilled as he had spoken, for in the month of October following young Jules was admitted into the Ecole Polytechnique, and attired in the brass-buttoned coat, straight sword, and trim cocked hat, which compose the uniform of that institution.

He remained a Polytechnician two years, and during that time had conic sections hammered into him by one professor, fortifications by a second, chemistry by a third, and the gentle art of wrapping one's head in wet towels the better to work all night by a fourth. The Ecole Polytechnique is a forcing-house, where the State endeavours to rear at great cost and with assiduous care that valuable plant called a *savant*. The better to do this, the State lays it down as a fundamental axiom that an amount of work which would kill a full-grown man outright need not interfere with the development of a growing boy. So the forcing is carried on at full steam, high pressure, and with all valves closed. The sprouting *savant* is kept to it morn, noon, and night, and bidden not forget that the eye of his country is upon him: the result of which is that if he do not prematurely collapse, the sprouting *savant* is restored to his affectionate family with his eyesight permanently weakened, his shoulders rounded, and a chronic singing in the head. Such was the fate of young Jules. After he had been at the school three months, being tenderly asked at home what he should like for a birthday present, he hinted at a pair of spectacles. At the end of half a year he gloomily directed his tailor to make his waistbands narrower. At the close of the twelvemonth he would occasionally complain that he felt something like a lump of lead inside his head; and on the day following the final examination he was laid up with brain-fever. But he had his reward. For when the lists were published his name was at the top; and the State, to recompense him for his noble efforts, for his two years of wet-towelling, and for his

brain-fever, lost no time in appointing him to the post of fifth Government engineer in a remote town near the Pyrenees, at a salary of—eighty pounds a year.

II.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the summer morning when young Jules dawned upon that town in the Pyrenees from the roof of a slow-paced diligence. It was the town of Tonscrétins. I was secretary to the prefect, M. de Feucontenn, and overnight my chief had said to me: "There is that young Torreau expected here to-morrow, but as Monsieur Nul, the chief engineer, is absent with his staff cutting out the new road, perhaps you had better go and meet the young fellow, and help him to find lodgings."

So at daybreak I was standing in the yard of the "Lion d'Or," waiting for the diligence to come in.

It was always regarded as something of a sight, this coming in of the diligence, so that whilst the serving-maid of the "Lion d'Or" was laying out on the polished oil-cloth of the dining-room table the pyramids of white rolls, the pats of fresh-churned butter, and the large round bowls that were by-and-by to be filled with *café au lait* for such of the travellers as liked to breakfast there, a few of the local quidnuncs who were early risers, congregated beside me, with their pipes in their mouths and their hands in their pockets, to see if perchance there should be anything new that morning. Mdlle. Jeannine, the serving-maid, looked at them, laughing, through the dining-room window, and said to me: "They're always the same—regular at their posts like oysters on a sand-bank. If you came here three hundred and sixty-five days out of the year you'd always find them. But what brings *you* here so early?"

I explained my errand to the young lady, and told her I had come to meet a Polytechnician.

"Ah!" said she, "I don't like Polytechnicians."

"I am sorry for that, for I think of bringing this particular one to lodge here."

"Then that's another bed I shall have to make, that's all."

"Why don't you like Polytechnicians?"

"What is there to like in them? Gentlemen who walk bent double like compasses, and who are for ever proving things by rule, just as if it wasn't the stupidest thing in the world to go by rule! I don't like people who prove things. The Saint-Cyrians are much better. There's your friend, M. de Gardefer of the Cuirassiers, who never knows what he says and is always laughing. He's much more amusing."

"And not bad-looking either, Mdlle. Jeannine?"

"I don't know anything about his looks—but chattering with you makes me lose time, M. Louis. There's the tooting of the diligence horn, too, and, *mon Dieu!* I've not yet put my milk on."

Amidst great clouds of dust, with the bells of its six mules all jingling

together, and the bluff voice of its Biscayan driver shouting *Hue! Hop là! Ho!* the massive vehicle came rumbling down the road, slackened its pace within sight of the inn, looked as if it would rock over when turned sharp opposite the courtyard, but righted itself without effort and rolled jolting over the paving-stones, through the gates, and so on up to the inn-door, where everybody alighted. The passengers who slid off the top and released themselves from the inside were of the usual category. A fat man with a portmanteau and a sheaf of umbrellas, walking-sticks, and fishing-rods, who had had the *coupé* all to himself; a trio of pot-manufacturers who had been talking earthenware all the way from the rival town of Tousabrutés; a young curate with a portentous mushroom hat, freshly ordained and nervous, who had essayed to strike up a mild conversation with a swarthy Provençal nurse in charge of a swarthy and squalling Provençal baby; and a brace of officers in mufti on the box, going back to garrison after furlough, and looking hugely bored. But all these travellers were of hale complexion, had pink faces and more or less square shoulders; whence it was easy for a connoisseur to guess that none of them was young Torreau of the Government Forcing-House. I waited till I saw a washed-out physiognomy arise from amidst the boxes on the roof, and peer around it with an air of scrutiny, and when this physiognomy, preceded by a pair of interminable and angular, yet withal deliberate legs, had scrambled down the sides of the diligence like some black outlandish spider, I stepped forward and said, "Monsieur Torreau, I believe?"

"Yes," said he, "Torreau." And he fixed upon me one of the most curiously expressive pair of eyes I had ever seen before or have seen since.

"My name is Louis Blamont," I added, "and I am here to act as your cicerone; in fact to render you any service in my power."

"You are very good," said he, and he began gravely to look about him for two very hard, corded, parallelogramic boxes that constituted his luggage; also for a mottled tin box, shaped like an isosceles triangle, and which presumably contained his cocked-hat.

"I will tell one of the ostlers to carry these up to your rooms," I suggested, observing him stoop to lift the heaviest and stiffest of the parallelograms himself.

"An ostler costs fivepence," was his discouraging reply, "and the thing will be sooner and better done if I do it myself." And with some little straining he contrived to hoist the box on to his shoulders as a bargeman does a sack of coals, and staggered with it towards the inn. To humour his whim, and save his unfortunate thin legs another journey, I caught up the second box and the isosceles triangle, and moved after him. "Here is an original character," thought I, and, struck with the novelty of a Government functionary of two-and-twenty perspiring to save fivepence, I watched with some curiosity to see what he would do next. What he did next was to carry his box to the very top of the house, on

the plea that the rooms on the lower stories would be too dear for him. Then he drove a hard bargain with the landlord of the "Lion d'Or," proved to him beyond power of refutation that the sum he had first asked for was excessive, and triumphantly secured a reduction of thirty sous a week. After which he extracted a new uniform from one of the parallelograms, and was about to retreat to his bedroom in order to put it on, when I stopped him by saying that if he purposed calling on the head engineer, his chief, he must wait till the morrow, as M. Nul and his subalterns were absent making the new road, four leagues off, and would not be back till evening.

"Well, I'll go and join them," said young Torreau, in a matter-of-fact way, without pausing to debate the question with anybody.

"On a sweltering day like this, walk twelve kilomètres!" I protested. "Come, come!"

"I know it's hot," answered he, significantly wiping the perspiration from his brow, "but Government is not going to give me a salary to take notes about the weather. Besides, I suspect the workmen who are cutting the road, find it quite as hot as I do."

"But you have not yet breakfasted," I remonstrated, "and I was just going to invite you."

"Oh, as to breakfast," said he, "I can buy a piece of bread and eat it going along."

And so he did, and set off on the spot, in an undress uniform, and with metrical implements under his arm, I escorting him, and acting as his guide. We went a kilomètre together, and there I left him. He had not spoken a dozen words the whole way, but had munched his crust and taken such formidable strides, that I returned in the same condition as if I had been in a vapour-bath. Breakfast had just been served at the prefecture, and I was in time to subside into my seat, and be asked whether I had been running a race, or doing anything else extraordinary.

"Well, and our new comer," added M. de Feucontenu, "does he promise to be an addition to our circle?"

"I hope he waltzes," remarked Madame la Préfète, whose one pre-occupation was the success of her Wednesday *Thé-Dansants*.

"And does he look as if he could play billiards?" asked Raoul de Gardefer, a sort of cousin of Madame la Préfète's, and tolerably regular in his attendance at our board.

I tried to describe what manner of a man young Torreau was; but toned down the colours rather, for being fresh from seeing the original, who had not impressed me as a very brilliant picture, I preferred he should have the chance of being judged on his own merits whenever he put in his appearance at the prefecture. What I said, however, was enough to make Madame de Feucontenu understand that he did not convey the idea of being a very enthusiastic waltzer, and Raoul de Gardefer that, whatever taste he might possess for billiards, he was not likely to bestow much money on that pastime. Madame la Préfète sighed, and Lieutenant de

Gardefer gave a shrug. As for the Prefect, he opined with a grin, that young Torreau's anxiety to be quick at work would wear off in time, as such industry generally did, and he was good-natured enough to point this remark, gathered from his profound experience of subalterns, at me. On the whole it was decided that young Torreau should have a card for the next Dancing Tea, and there be put through all the social ordeals, one after the other.

But several days before the Dancing Tea, mysterious rumours began to circulate about the town. It should be premised that Touscrétins was not used to emotions of any sort: it did not like them, it would have nothing to say to them. In a general way it was a peaceful town, fond of order, and paying its taxes. It also greatly respected the Government. Such men as thrived in other places, journalists and the like, had no hold there: they withered up by the roots and perished miserably. There was indeed a legend, purporting that at some time or other, vaguely undefined, a misguided individual had tried to start an opposition paper at Touscrétins, but it was only a legend. Serious people declined to believe that such a venture could have been possible, and even the authors of the legend acknowledged that the editor, after selling one copy of his first and last impression, departed from the town at nightfall indebted to his printer, and was never heard of again. Touscrétins was not likely to miss him. There was that in the town's very appearance which suggested constituted authority, and the inborn, unlimited worship of it. The streets were seldom swept. If there was anything to be done, no man exactly knew who was the person to do it. If anything unpleasant happened, the blame was sure to light upon half-a-dozen wrong shoulders before settling on the right ones; and, when once it got *there*, it did not sit very heavily. Nobody had the faintest ghost of a notion as to what became of the public moneys that were levied of a quarter-day by means of rates; and those who spent these funds had less notions than the rest. Finally, no Government employé had ever been seen to do any other work there than draw his salary. In fact it was a well-governed town.

And how could it have been otherwise, when one considered the number of Government functionaries which Touscrétins, in common with most other French towns, then as now, possessed? They were innumerable, unimaginable, ensconced everywhere; roosting on every perch, lodged in every conceivable nook; very rats in number, cohesiveness, and rodent appetite. Perhaps I may as well give a list of them:—A prefect, a secretary-general, and three councillors of prefecture; a president of the tribunal, four assistant-judges, a stipendiary justice of the peace, two clerks of court, and a public prosecutor; a receiver-general of taxes and two sub-receivers; a verifcator of weights and measures, a chief of the custom-house, and two lieutenants; a high-keeper of the woods and forests (there were none to keep), and two sub-keepers; a commissary of police and a deputy commissary; a captain of gendarmerie and his lieutenant; a rector of academy, a postmaster, a keeper of the archives

(which consisted in one deal-box full of papers), and two sub-keepers ; a chief engineer, an inspector of roads and bridges, and four assistant engineers ; a bishop, two vicars-general, one dean, one archdeacon, six canons, two rectors, and eleven curates : tailing upon which gallant procession was an army of five hundred and thirty-seven clerks, postmen, wood-rangers, custom-house officers, tax-gatherers, gendarmes, beadles, vergers, policemen, inspectors of quart-pots and flirlots, tipstaff court ushers, prison jailers, prison governors, and police spies—all of whom, without exception, were remunerated out of the public purse. Taking the thing in the aggregate, the cost of the town of Touserétins to the State (Touserétins, exclusive of its functionaries and their families, boasted a population of five thousand and three souls), was about three million five hundred thousand francs, or say 150,000*l.* a year. What Touserétins gave back to the State in exchange for these sums, neither I nor anybody else have ever been able to determine.

Now it is easy to comprehend the sort of dismay that fell upon everybody when it was heard one morning that a stranger had come within the town, who felt disposed to criticize this state of things. It is never pleasant to be criticized. When a man has a good-sized wen that has taken up its abode on the nape of his neck, he does not thank you for calling attention to this wen ; holding it up to scorn, and proposing violently to cut it off. So it is with a town that has a nice little cluster of abuses flourishing somewhere about it. Much better let the wen and the abuses alone, says Worldly Wisdom, and so said they of Touserétins. They would have spoken outright on the subject to the greatest man in the world, had he attempted to reform them ; but their sentiments found much more indignant expression upon their discovering that their new-come critic was not any mighty statesman or bishop from Paris—no grandee traveller or sage from the other side of the Pyrenees—but simply that lanky young bit of an engineer from the Polytechnic School, who had not been in the town six days.

Somehow the news of this scandal reached the prefecture, and did not much surprise me, for I had guessed from the expression of young Torreau's eyes, and a certain look of being constantly ready to argue the point with you, that he would be an Ishmael, finding few to agree with him. But the intelligence amazed and disconcerted my chief, the Prefect ; the fact being, that M. de Feucontennu was a sort of reformer himself, and, like a good many of that kind, naturally looked upon every other reformer as a trespasser upon his own reserved ground. Not that M. de Feucontennu, mind, went in for reform in the sense of improvement—that, of course, would have been going a little too far for a prefect. But, for instance, if he found that a thing had long been done *this* way, it was odds but he suggested one should try and do it *that* way, just for a change ; and if everything went wrong from being done *that* way—as it sometimes did—the public were fain to own that M. le Préfet had paid his tribute to the modern idea of progress by his spirited attempt at innovation. It is

almost needless to add that M. de Feucontenu was comparatively young—not more than five-and-forty—and expected to earn promotion by his indefatigable energy. The prefectorate of Tousecrétins was his first high post, and, being his secretary, it was I who penned the remarkable despatches to the Home Office, in which he recapitulated his “reforms,” and stated his object, which was to convince the population that Government had an eye unceasingly and vigilantly fixed upon all their needs. When, therefore, M. de Feucontenu came by the knowledge of what young Torreau was up to, he frowned and exclaimed,—“This young fellow is making a bad beginning; it seems he has several times uttered opinions that were most bold to listen to. I should have thought better of a man of his education.”

“And not yet twenty-five,” ejaculated M^{me}. de Feucontenu, as who should say,—“So young and so depraved!”

“Have you any precise information, sir, as to what Torreau has been saying or doing?” I inquired, for I had as yet heard no specific charge adduced.

“Well,” said M. de Feucontenu, with a rather scared expression, “I hear that, on his very first day, he remarked that five engineers were being employed to do what could very well be accomplished by a single one; also that there were twice too many workmen; but—what is infinitely graver than this—he went the length of complaining of the works themselves, said that the road was unskilfully planned, that it might have been cut at half the cost, and have been at once more convenient and more durable. You understand the effect this produced upon M. Nul. For a man of talent to be criticized by one of his own subordinates, is a most painful situation, especially when there seems a likelihood of public opinion agreeing with the subordinate.”

“Is there a likelihood of that?” asked Raoul de Gardefer, laughing.

“Public opinion always goes wrong,” answered M. de Feucontenu.

“Don’t you think, Blamont, you had better go and call upon this young fellow, and you too, Gardefer? Point out to him what a mistaken course he is following; explain that what carping minds call abuses are in most instances the vital elements of certain systems of government, which it is the interest, nay, the duty, of all order-loving persons to uphold. Add, moreover, that for a young functionary to display too much zeal is not seemly, being an implied slight on the capacity of his superiors. In fact, talk him over, turn his mind towards suitable subjects, and try to make him a little more like yourselves.”

“I don’t know whether we are to accept that as a compliment,” laughed the Lieutenant, as he shook hands with M^{me}. la Préfète, and buckled on his sword.

“To-night is my *Thé Dansant*,” smiled the Préfète; “you will do well to bring M. Torreau back with you.”

III.

Mdme. la Préfète's Dancing Teas were generally well thronged, and when Raoul de Gardefer and I entered the rooms towards ten, bringing young Torreau with us in tow, they were more than half filled with the cream of that society skimmed off the top of our population of five thousand and three souls. I cannot say young Torreau had shown himself much overwhelmed with the sense of the honour done him by his invitation to the tea. He even seemed to regret the four francs he was compelled to disburse on a pair of white gloves, and made no secret of his reluctance to introduce himself into an extremely tight pair of patent-leather boots. But there he was, notwithstanding, dressed like everybody, and surveying the contortionate scene of a prefectural hop, with the smileless face and the serious gaze of a man who has some sort of idea that he is being hoaxed, and would like to know what possible pleasure human beings can find in jumping about in this way. We introduced him to the mistress of the house, who was still young, and pretty, and very affable, and asked him whether he danced. "Oh, no!" said he, in the same tone as if the muttered corollary were, "not I." "But I will find you a partner," continued she, laughing a little. "Well, if you do, Madame," was his quiet answer, "we shall both be falling down together over those slippery boards, and there will be somebody's leg broken."

This was the sort of thing that Raoul de Gardefer and I had been undergoing during the whole afternoon. Young Torreau had not been influenced in the faintest degree by our visit of remonstrance. On the contrary, he had beguiled us into controversy, and, bringing the heavy artillery of logical syllogisms to bear on every proposition we advanced, routed us hip and thigh, the pair of us. On walking into his rooms on the topmost flat of the "Lion d'Or," we had found him covering an enormous sheet of foolscap with respectful observations addressed to the Minister of Public Works. In the first place, he requested to be sent to some other town, for, as there were already three more engineers than there was any necessity for, he looked upon himself as a useless incumbence. In the next place, he submitted that if every State road were cut on the same extravagant plan as the one which he had seen, and with the same total disregard of scientific principles, there was no need to pay engineers for doing such work—it might just as well be intrusted to navvies or stonebreakers. He concluded by offering to complete the road himself at a third of the present expense if he were allowed to do so untrammelled, that is, without the assistance of his chief, M. Nul, whom he regarded as a most incapable individual.

"Well, but," exclaimed Raoul de Gardefer aghast, and yet scarcely able to keep from laughing, as young Torreau coolly read us this document, "you surely don't mean to say that you intend sending that?"

"Why not?" asked Jules Torreau, turning round on his chair, and nibbling the end of his penholder. Through the glasses of his spectacles

gleamed that expression of being ready to argue which I had instinctively learned to look upon as hopeless.

"I mean you can hardly think of ramming your head so completely into a hornet's nest," pursued the Lieutenant.

"I don't see that," protested Jules Torreau. "Who are the hornets?"

Raoul de Gardefer explained in an easy way that every Government office was a nest of hornets for those who went there to call attention to abuses. Perhaps if the abuse was a very, very small one, and the person thriving upon it a very, very small person, there was a remote prospect of the abuse receiving the most attentive consideration of a very, very small clerk, bearing a personal grudge against the very small person; and perhaps the abuse would be removed to this extent, that the very small person would be dismissed, and replaced by a cousin or nephew of the very small clerk, who would lose no time in implanting some other abuse worse than that which had been eradicated. But for any man, not a sworn foe to his own peace, to presume attacking abuses fostered by people holding a certain status, eminent, or wealthy, or distantly connected with one or more clerks paid handsomely for doing nothing at the public cost, was about as promising a way of spending one's time as the trying to stop a mountain torrent with the bottom of one's wig, or the riding full tilt at a stone wall, or the going to do battle with a hippopotamus, armed with a wooden paper-cutter.

"Ah! but these are no mere charges," exclaimed young Torreau, bridling up. "I can prove them—prove everything. See here," and he caught up an imposing sheet, illustrated with diagrams, geometrical figures, and exhaustive foot-notes. "Here is the plan of the road such as I would have it, and here is Nul's plan. Mine, you see, saves half-an-hour's walk between this point and that. It also takes one under shelter of a stretch of rocks, which would prevent the road being continually swept by winds, and, in the event of war—should we ever be invaded from the South—would offer a sure line of march to our troops, and enable them to entrench themselves as if in a fortress. Nul's road runs along a bleak bit of table-land, where the dust would blind one in summer, and the gales carry one off one's legs in winter. It would be utterly impracticable for military purposes. The expense of keeping it in repair would be terrific, and the only possible way that I can see of maintaining it permanently would be by planting along it a four-league-long avenue of fir-trees, which would cost you may guess what, and not be available for another twenty years."

"Well, you may be right," answered Raoul de Gardefer, surveying the plans not without interest; "but believe me, M. Torreau, the less we youngsters show our elders that their heads are growing soft, the better they will like it; and the less risk we shall run of being oppressed, repressed, and, finally, sup-pressed."

Jules Torreau took back his diagrams, nursed his knee for a few

moments, during which he eyed us both with some little dejection, and at length exclaimed, "If it be so, more's the pity; but I really see no reason in it for not doing one's duty. If I notice that a blunder is going to be committed, I am obviously bound to try and prevent it. I am sure, Monsieur, that, if you detected any abuses in your regiment, you would feel it your duty to denounce them."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the Lieutenant, piously. "I should be writing despatches day and night."

And here the matter ended. Not ended in so far as talk was concerned, for we talked during many hours, endeavouring to instil prudence into our new friend's head. But, talk as we might, we could never rid him of the conviction that the official world was a free hunting-ground, where any one who espied an abuse had a right to aim at it with loaded barrels, and bring it down if he could. Impossible to make him understand by a reference to the game-laws, the harmonious system of preserved lands, privileged shooters, and the rest of it. Impossible to make him grasp the idea, that what on the part of one man was lawful, coming from another was poaching. He remained obtuse on this point; and was just as far wrong as ever when, in the evening, baffled and worn out by his calm, quiet obstinacy, we took him to *Mdme. la Préfète's* party.

"I wonder whether our hostess will be more fortunate with him?" said *Gardefer*, amused, as the seductive *Préfète*, after her futile attempt to make young *Torreau* dance, begged him to lead her to a seat, and tried to draw some conversation out of him.

In a few minutes more we saw the pretty *Mdme. de Feucontenu* fanning herself and listening, whilst *Jules Torreau*, with his hands twitching at his gloves and his patent-leather boots evidently causing him uneasiness, was holding forth with a collected sort of fluency on topics which we could not catch for the braying of a brass band, to the inspiring strains of which four-and-twenty couples of *Tousserétinians* were actively quadrilling. It then occurred to me that, under present circumstances, an entertaining person to see would be *Jules Torreau's* victim, the unhappy *M. Nul*, whose life had hitherto been devoid of cares. So I cast about for that official until I found him in the card-room, playing whist with the President of the Tribunal, a dowager, and a dummy, and having the air of a man whose whole soul is impendent upon the ace of spades. And yet *M. Nul* had formerly been one of the most brilliant men of his day, and even now he carried a head that might have sat worthily on the shoulders of Olympian Jupiter. Unfortunately, there was nothing inside the head. It was like a plaster-of-paris bust—brainless; or, to employ a more homely simile, it resembled one of those walnuts which are, indeed, large and robust-looking without, but which inside have nought but the ghostly vestige of a kernel. *M. Nul* had begun in the same way as young *Torreau*—by the Polytechnic School. Like his subaltern, he had come out from thence at the top of the list, with spectacles, and a brain-fever; but, unlike him, the brain-fever seemed never to have left

his head, but to have settled there under the chronic form of a mild imbecility, harmless to himself personally, but fatal to every species of work which he undertook. Of course, however, nobody amongst the public noticed that M. Nul was imbecile, nor that his work was trash; for it is one of the happiest effects of the competitive examination mania prevalent in this age that a youth who, by dint of stupendous cramming, manages to distance a certain number of other youths at twenty, is held to be wise, and an object meet for distinction ever after; and this though every particle of the knowledge acquired in his laborious cram may have leaked out of his pate, like water through a sieve, long before he has attained the ripe age of twenty years and six weeks. So M. Nul on starting in his professional career was loaded with favours. And he made roads which crumbled away, and built bridges that fell in, and water-dykes which burst, and aqueducts that flooded whole miles of country; and, thanks to a long series of such works, waxed each year higher in public esteem, until he had reached his present post, that of chief engineer of an entire department, where he did an incredible deal of harm in an innocent way, and was universally respected. So much respected that, in the hour of danger, not a man but would have put his whole confidence in M. Nul, and been brought to grief by him, with faith unshaken in his merits. Alas! what am I saying? The hour of danger *did* come, and, not one department only, but our whole country put its faith in M. Nul. For were they not all Messieurs Nul, those princes, generals, strategists, lawyers, who in the hour of France's need were in charge of the helm, and in one short year steered her out of the sea of glory, where she had so long and so proudly sailed, on to the rocks and shoals where her greatness and fame have been wrecked? But, after all, why talk of this? It is a thing of the past now—and words mend nothing.

M. Nul finished his game as I was watching him, counted his cards carefully twice over and ejaculated:

"I have one trick."

Which trick being the one needed to win the rubber, M. Nul slowly pocketed the stakes, rose with equal slowness from the table, and took up his position in a doorway, doing nothing and saying nothing. I approached him and wished him good evening; and then I observed that his eyes were turned with something of an uneasy expression towards the corner of the adjoining room, where young Jules Torreau was still discoursing with Madame la Prefete. It was not difficult to perceive that, placid as M. Nul might be, the advent of young Jules had introduced an element of bitterness into his hitherto unruffled existence, though probably he did not quite understand what this bitterness was, nor what it meant.

"I have been calling to-day on your new assistant M. Torreau," I remarked, half-experimentally.

"Yes, Torreau. His name's Torreau. Jules Torreau is the new engineer's name. I am making a road, and he says he could make a

road. But mine's better." M. Nul turned his opinion over once or twice in his mind as if to give his rival every chance, and then repeated with great satisfaction, "Mine's better."

"And after you have completed the road, I believe you are to begin a new reservoir?"

"Yes, a reservoir; a new reservoir. A new reservoir is what we are going to begin. And it will be a good reservoir." Again M. Nul turned over this sentiment once or twice in order that his rival might have the fairest play, and repeated with increased satisfaction, "It will be a good reservoir."

Just at this moment M. de Feucontennu, the Prefect, came hurrying along through the ball-room, upset, and holding a newspaper in his hand.

"Ah," said he, catching sight of us, "look at this, M. Nul, and you, Blamont. Here are pretty goings-on. This is last night's *Gazette des Boulevards* just come from Paris, and it contains the first of a series of articles headed LETTRES D'UN FONCTIONNAIRE, which is nothing but a pasquinade upon this town and everybody connected with it. Just see this: it describes our town to the life; and this—a 'prefect whose brains are like the froth on the top of a pint-pot,' that must be me; and here again—an 'engineer who is an ass,' that can only be you. By heavens, there is but one man who can have written this, and it must be that young Torreau; certain engineering terms that he has let slip in betray him. Egad! he must have set to work upon us the very morning after he got here. And to think that we are promised three of these letters every week until all abuses shall have been divulged!"

In blank dismay the Prefect handed the paper to M. Nul and reiterated, "Three letters every week!"

M. Nul took the journal, turned it over and said profoundly: "*La Gazette des Boulevards*. *La Gazette des Boulevards* is the name of this paper. And he says, 'an engineer who is an ass.' Yes, certainly, that can only be me."

We were here joined by l'Abbé Pincette, chaplain of the prefecture, a neat dapper man, who exclaimed, much discontented: "I have been talking with that new engineer, M. Torreau, and I much fear that his mind is not godly. In the first five minutes he told me that the early fathers were sophists, steeped up to the neck in ignorance, and of extremely bad faith in controversy. Also, that he declined to believe Christianity was the origin of civilization, but that he was ready to argue the point."

"And he was just as bad in what he said to me," chimed in Mdme. la Préfète, arriving with flushes of ill-concealed indignation on her pretty face. "I asked him whether he thought he should like our town, and he answered that perhaps he might if it were rebuilt and the inhabitants changed. Then I was telling him about the burning of the prefecture forty years ago, and he said it must have inconvenienced me greatly, just as if I was alive at that time and already Préfète."

After this, it stood evident that it was all up with Jules Torreau. Abandoned by Church, State, and womankind together, he was on the down-road to perdition by the express, and with all brakes up.

But I am afraid I should weary you if I were to recapitulate *seriatim* all the episodes of young Torreau's Odyssey in the town of Tousecrétins. If you have ever watched the career of a dog suspected of madness through the streets of an alarmed city, you must have observed how the hue-and-cry is first raised by some girl with a broomstick, then caught up by some ostler with a bucket, and how the inhabitants on both sides of the road, terrified by the sounds, issue out of their houses—when the dog is past—armed with sticks, old matchlocks, pitchforks, and join in the chase, howling frenziedly and at almost as great a rate as the dog himself. So it was with young Torreau. To all intents and purposes he was, in the eyes of Tousecrétins, a mad dog; and when it was an ascertained fact that he both barked and bit, the population showed him no quarter. All those noble creatures called Vested Interests were up and after him at full cry. Every man who drew a sixpence from the State coffers, or wished to draw sixpence, or had a cousin desiring to draw sixpence, shrieked and raved. "For a man, himself a functionary, to lay bare the sores of his profession, to hold up abuses to the public eye, to clamour for their cure—Horror! Grief! Scandal!" Unluckily for young Torreau, he had spared nobody. In those letters to the Paris newspaper, he laid about him with the undiscriminating energy and the entire impartiality of youth. His blows fell with terrific thwacks to the right and left of him, upon necks and shoulders, heads and tails. Not a man holding office but had a weal to show; not one but had been excoriated in some tender place by this diabolical and incisive operator. Voted an unmitigated nuisance by the whole official community, he was taxed with the authorship of the letters, and denied them. But this would not do. The letters had attracted notice; they were making the Parisians laugh; the Government were surprised and indignant at them. As for the inhabitants of Tousecrétins, they congregated round the diligence when it came in with the papers from Paris, and grabbed excitedly at the numbers, to see who was the new victim. Under these circumstances, M. de Feucontennu, in the interests of order and morality, felt it binding upon him to take a resolution. To the three hundred and odd postmasters of his department he issued orders that they would examine all parcels "of a suspicious appearance" destined for Paris—that is, all parcels that looked as if they might contain copy. By these means young Torreau's guilt was clearly traced home to him. His signature was there, at the bottom of a letter to the editor. Here was a case of *flagrans delictum*. It was determined to make an example of him.

I should mention cursorily that throughout all the storm of obloquy that raged over young Torreau's misguided head, and throughout all the persecutions that were eventually levelled at him—persecutions in which M. de Feucontennu, my chief, took the leading part, egging on the inert

M. Nul, who, certainly, had not originality enough of his own left to persecute anybody—throughout all this troublous time, I say, there were two of us who stuck faithfully by young Torreau, and those two were Raoul de Gardefer and myself. We stuck by him because we had got to like him. We had little fellow-feeling for the knight-errant crusades he had undertaken, like Cervantes' great hero, against social windmills. Indeed, I, for my part, enter my most distinct protest against any man on this snug earth of ours attempting to reform anything. When I see an abuse flourishing anywhere, I am for having it let alone, until it dies a natural and venerable death; for a long experience has convinced me that as fast as one abuse disappears another springs up in its place, and that—to use the words of a clever Frenchman—“*Plus ça change et plus c'est la même chose.*” But we liked young Torreau, because of his earnestness, and because he was a good fellow. When one saw him stalk in his black clothes through the scared highways of Tousecrétins, with his hands buried in his hind pockets, his eyes fixed on the pavement, and his head evidently cogitating over some telling hit for his next philippic, it was impossible not to feel that here was a fanatic who might be wrong, but who, in taking up the cudgels against Society, was clearly following the road which Nature had marked out for him beforehand as if with a piece of chalk. Then, he was generous: his parsimony only extended to himself. On his own needs he spent next to nothing; but if asked to subscribe to the wants or pleasures of others, he gave handsomely, almost prodigally. Moreover, he was plucky without ostentation. Being dragged into a quarrel—*à propos* of one of his letters—by an irate individual, who had chosen to consider himself alluded to, he had gone out and stood his adversary's fire; then, when his own turn came to aim, he had said, “You're not worth killing!” and discharged his pistol in the air.

So when we perceived that official displeasure was weaving its net round him and drawing the meshes every day closer, we resolved to make one more attempt to expostulate with him and save him. It was not our second attempt, nor yet our tenth, for we had amicably bantered and cautioned him whenever thrown in his company. But banter he did not understand, and caution was lost upon him. It was only by elasticity of hope that we could expect that he would see his danger more accurately this time, and that we should be more fortunate. We accordingly bent our steps towards the “Lion d'Or.”

But we had been forestalled, and by the persons best qualified to pull him out of his pit, if so be that he could be pulled out. When we knocked at his door, we found him surrounded by the whole Torreau family in tears: Torreau senior mopping his face with his handkerchief and holding his hat dismally between his knees; M^{me}. Torreau with her bonnet-strings unfastened and her maternal bosom heaving, whilst her hands grasped one of young Jules's with a sort of entreaty; pretty M^{lle}. Victorine Torreau with her eyes red; and, on various chairs about the room, the uncle in the tailoring way, the other uncle who sold the

simili-panamas, and a ripe cluster of maiden aunts. All these worthy people having somehow heard that the hope and pride of their little circle had got himself into hot water, but not knowing, nor able to guess, how that could be, had hurried down in a tremor of anxiety, but with the vague belief that their presence would set everything to rights. They were now adjuring young Jules not to cause them grief and trouble—not to disappoint their long and fondly-cherished hopes of seeing him great and prosperous.

"But really, mother," young Jules was exclaiming, half-impatiently, as Raoul and I crossed the threshold, "one would think I had been committing some great crime to hear the way you talk."

"Oh, gentlemen," said Mdme. Torreau, after we had been formally introduced, "you must excuse these tears; but we have been so overcome. Our only son, and never given us a day's uneasiness till now!"

"I wouldn't believe it at first," ejaculated Torreau senior, sadly. "Wouldn't believe that Jules had taken to writing in newspapers."

"And against the Government!" continued Mdme. Torreau.

"Against the Government!" echoed Torreau senior; and in a doleful way he took up some papers lying open on young Jules's desk, and read them for the twentieth time. It seems that one of them was the official reply to that memorable despatch in which young Jules, not yet in his place a week, had stated his candid opinion of his chief, M. Nul; and the others were categorical demands on the part of Government to be told whether or no M. Torreau was the author of certain letters reflecting disparagingly on divers eminent persons and institutions? It turned out that young Jules had given as his final answer that he refused to afford any explanation whatever on this question, which he contended that nobody had any right to put to him. And conformably to his practice, he had argued this last point.

"I am afraid all this will end badly," was Torreau senior's desponding commentary, whereat Mdme. Torreau began to weep anew.

"Oh, my child," pleaded she, "do you not remember, when you won the Great Prize, how I cried for joy; and how, when the people applauded you, I felt so proud and grateful that I could have gone down on my knees and thanked God before everybody for what He was doing for us? And do you not remember how, when we came down the great staircase amidst all your schoolfellows cheering us, my arm trembled on yours, and I whispered in your ear that, heaven willing, you should always stand as high in the esteem of your friends as you did then? Dear child, do not let the dreams we then made for you come to nothing. You are our only hope, darling; you will have pity on our old age, won't you?" And the good lady threw her arms, sobbing, round her son's neck.

"You hear what your mother says, Jules," faltered honest Torreau senior, who was himself fairly upset; and, indeed, I think at that moment there were not many dry eyes in the room.

"Come, Torreau," said Raoul de Gardefer, who had been twitching

very nervously at his moustache during all this, "we will turn over a new leaf, won't we? This sort of thing doesn't do at our age, old fellow—it really doesn't."

"God bless you, sir!" ejaculated a maiden aunt.

Young Jules was sustaining his mother and kissing her. He was extremely pale; but what his answer would have been none of us ever knew, for at this juncture Mlle. Jeannine, the maid, having knocked, entered with a large letter, in a blue envelope, and with a Government seal, which she presented to young Jules.

Then a great silence fell upon everybody, and there also fell, I imagine, a presentiment of evil. We all fixed our eyes apprehensively on the letter. The only cool person in the room was young Jules, who broke the seal.

This is what he read:—

"Ministry of Public Works, Paris."

"SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that, your answers to my despatch of the 21st being pre-eminently unsatisfactory, and your public career, though short, having been marked from the first by an habitual disregard of duty, a flagrant spirit of insubordination, and by the authorship of certain newspaper articles, rendered the more culpable from your persistency in denying them, I have arrived at the conclusion submitted to me by M. Nul, your chief, and by M. de Feucontenn, the Prefect of Tonscrétins, that you are not fitted for the post with which the Government had entrusted you. I have, therefore, recommended to the Minister of War that your commission should be cancelled, and you cease from this day to be a public servant.

"I have the honour to remain, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"CASIMIR BARBOTTE,

"Minister of Public Works."

One might have heard a fly buzz in the room when Jules Torreau, after reading this dismissal, threw it down upon the table. The melancholy pause was broken by Mme. Torreau, who dried her eyes and said, "My child, your sister and I will go and throw ourselves at the Emperor's feet, and ask him to forgive you."

IV.

But young Jules was definitely overboard, and no mother's tears or supplications could avail to reinstate him. We lost sight of him. Like a meteor, he had flashed for a brief space over our benighted town of Tonscrétins, and like a meteor he disappeared, leaving behind him for a while a luminous trail in the shape of many grudges glowing in the breasts of such personages as he had frightened. But by-and-by, for want of further causes of resentment to feed them, these grudges flickered out. Men are

too busy nowadays to hate long—our passions, like our affairs, go railway pace. So Jules was forgotten, and few amongst his former friends or foes knew, or cared to know, that the caustic writer who began about that time to take a lead in the opposition press, under the pseudonym of Maillotin, and whose articles grew daily more vigorous, more violent, and,—must one add it?—more unreasonable, was the same as the young engineer who had broken his first lances by tilting at M. Nul. I, for my part, had let the fact almost slip from my memory, so true is it that friends to keep in mind must keep in sight, when I was put in remembrance of it by being unexpectedly brought into contact with my old acquaintance, in the spring of the present twelvemonth.

Some six or seven years had elapsed since our last meeting, and our poor France was woefully altered. But events had wrought in her greater changes than time. The Second Empire, and its abuses, had been swept away, and we were now living under the Commune de Paris, which was to do away altogether with abuses, or import new ones of its own, people were not yet quite clear which. Of the persons present at that family scene in the garret of the "Lion d'Or," two at least were in their graves—the excellent M. and M^{me}. Torreau, who, I fancy, owed their ends to something subtler than the ailments which human doctors can cure. M^{lle}. Victorine had been married by her brother, not to a husband who, like herself, had "cent mille livres de dot," but to Celestin Goubarbe, her father's ex-apprentice, who had not got a penny. Raoul de Gardefer become a colonel, war and valour aiding, was besieging the capital with the Versailles troops, and I—but never mind about myself. Suffice it to say that I was in Paris, and not quite certain whether my opinions were likely to secure me a long enjoyment of freedom under the peculiar kind of liberty we were inaugurating.

It was a lovely April morning, the sky so blue and speckless, the sun so golden, the breath of the air so balmy, that everything seemed possible in such weather—everything but civil strife, which struck one as a sacrilege. The streets were alive and gay with colours; battalions trooping with their scarlet facings, blue képis, and flashing bayonets. Artillery lumbering gaily over the paving-stones, with the men seated by threes on the gun-carriages, smoking and shouting to one another. Along the roads workmen arm-in-arm, and six in a line, with cartridge-boxes round their waists and rifles slung over their shoulders, singing and cheering when a battalion passed, or waving their caps when some communal chieftain, not over firmly seated on his charger, cantered by smiling, and doing his best to look as if he were not holding on by the pommel. Most of the shops closed. On the walls large and beautifully printed white proclamations, headed, "République Française—Commune de Paris." And beside them red ones, more shabbily printed, and issuing from the Comité Central of the National Guard. From the roof of one house in every twenty, and from five windows out of a hundred, fluttered lazily the crimson banner of the Insurrection—a dashing standard enough if it had not signified fire

and carnage—and over the church doors, now closed, beamed the words, “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.” As a grim and ironical commentary to these mottoes, cannon booming faintly in the distance, and ambulance-waggons passing every now and then through the streets slowly, and loaded with wounded.

“I should do much better not to go out,” said my friends, as I was putting on my hat; but friends always speak in this strain, and after walking about for an hour unmolested, I was reflecting how extremely wise I had been not to follow their advice. Just then I was in the Place Vendôme, having been taking a look at the column which my morning paper had informed me was doomed, and emerging into the Rue Castiglione, was about to cross the road, when the clatter of hoofs became audible, and a goodly cavalcade burst in sight. It turned out to be the Citoyen Quelquechose, member of the Commune, and Generalissimo of something, riding somewhere, in gaudy apparel, accompanied by his morganatic spouse and a brilliant staff. Of course, the central figure of the picture was the morganatic spouse. She was riding a handsome charger—a white one—probably requisitioned from the ex-imperial stables, and cut as brave a figure as could be wished in her blue habit, silver-laced jacket, and white fur busby with red egret. As the whole procession filed past at an amble, she heading it by a neck, she gave a little toss of her comely head, and slightly lowered her eyes on me, evidently expecting to be bowed to. I lifted my hat with pleasure, musing as I did so, that if the Commune de Paris did nothing worse than dress up pretty women in fancy costume, there was no very great objection to be taken against it. But when it came to be a question of saluting the tag-rag and bobtail staff, who jolted behind like so many sacks perched on saddles, and answering their cries of “*Vive la Commune!*” I thought my philosophy had gone far enough, and I walked on with my hat on my head and my tongue silent.

“Hullo there!” shouted a workman behind me, who had been a spectator of the whole incident and was scandalized, “just you stop; you never cried ‘*Vive la Commune!*’”

“No, I really did not,” was my answer.

“Then just do so,” said he with a beery hiccough, and laying his hand on my sleeve.

I shook myself free.

“Suppose you mind your own business, citizen.”

“Mind my own business!” he yelled. “I like that. Hi! citizens, here’s a traitor, a Versaillais, an agent of Bismarck’s! He cries, ‘Down with the Republic!’”

In a trice I was surrounded. At the most peaceful of times it requires but a few seconds to collect a Parisian mob, but in times of war or rebellion the mobs seem to spring from the pavement ready made and ready howling.

“A Versaillais! a traitor! to prison with him!” was the cry; and I

was immediately apprehended, jostled and pushed forward, a squad of street-boys protesting energetically against the waste of time involved in the conveyal of me to prison, and suggesting I should be shot there and then as a wholesome warning.

Now this may be amusing enough to write about at three months' distance, but it was not particularly funny then; and I began to perceive, as my captors hurried me along with more haste than ceremony, that I had got myself into an awkward predicament. It was then, that raising my eyes by a providential chance, they lit upon a placard on which were the names of all the members of the Commune, and conspicuous amongst those names, that of Jules Maillotin. "Surely," thought I, "this Maillotin must be the same as my old friend Jules Torreau;" and without pausing to meditate whether my old friend would prove to be still as fraternally disposed towards me as I was towards him,—for it is not only princes who turn cold shoulders on old but inconvenient acquaintances—I cried in a firm voice: "Citizens, I demand to be taken before the Citizen Maillotin." "If Torreau's memory be short," murmured I to myself, "I shall probably be shot; but nothing venture nothing have."

The beery citizen, who was clutching tight hold of me by the neck-cloth, as much I fancy to steady himself as to drag me, stopped and said: "You know the Citizen Maillotin?"

"He knows the Citizen Maillotin!" echoed another citizen behind, who had been tranquilly exploring my pockets.

An enthusiastic female Republican had rid me of my handkerchief, and tied it round her neck. She threw it back to me, and said: "If you are a friend of Maillotin's they won't harm you; if you're not—*cou-ic!*" and with a forefinger she made a graceful gesture of passing a knife across her throat.

"We'll take him to the Hôtel-de-Ville," chorussed all the citizens together; and to the Hôtel-de-Ville we went.

I need not, I think, stop to describe this interesting edifice, which has since been offered up as a sacrifice to the genius of democracy; but I would remark that those who missed seeing the Hôtel-de-Ville whilst it was in possession of the Commune, have lost something for which no sight either in this or the next generation is likely to compensate them. It was pleasant and unique—a thing to see if only to acquire an idea of the manner in which human nature will disport itself when allowed to go its own ways. There were no doubt curious things to be seen at the Hôtel-de-Ville in '48 and '93. But on both of those former auspicious occasions, when the world was turned upside down, there was some sort of cohesion, some discipline, some order amidst the general hash, which kept matters going with an appearance of ship-shape. But nothing of that sort this time. Here we had the genuine article—democracy pure, each man his own king, and declining to render obedience to anybody or anything under any pretext whatever. To tell the truth, I think when we begin to accept democracy, we had better go the whole length at once; there is something logical and elevating in the position which seduces one.

In the first courtyard, going in, I heard a captain call to one of his men, and say it was time for him to come and mount guard; and the man answered that he would come presently, when he had finished his game of picquet. In a vestibule another captain was giving himself a brush down, whilst half his company lolled around him on the floor in easy attitudes, and apparently much amused to see the efforts their chief was making to reach a particular speck of mud situated in the small of his back, and not attainable by the brush. On the grand staircase, resplendent with marble and gilt bronze, I was much pleased to see a frugal housewife seated and shelling haricot-beans into a basin. Of course, she would have been much more comfortable shelling her beans at home, and probably felt it; but then this would not have been Republican. The moment you have free institutions, the Municipal Palace evidently becomes the proper place to shell beans in. This is self-evident.

"We want the Citizen Maillotin," hiccupped my beery captor for the twentieth time, as we trudged all together into the State apartments.

"You'll find him in one of the rooms somewhere," answered a citizen in a blouse, who was scratching his name with a pin on one of M. Baur's mural paintings.

"There—through that door," bawled another, recumbent on a rose-wood table: "I saw him go in an hour ago," and in another moment I was standing in a sumptuous chamber, which I remembered as a supper-room when Prefect Haussmann was still reigning and gave those famous balls of his. At a table, which must many a time have groaned under the weight of iced pails of Clicquot, truffled pasties, golden fruit-vases, and other products of a pampered civilization, my old friend Jules Torreau, in a uniform of officer of the National Guard, was seated, writing.

He shaded his eyes with his hand, looked at me a moment, and said, recognizing me, "Ha, Blamont, this is a surprise!"

It was the same smileless face, quick but quiet way, and penetrating expression of the eyes; and it was also the same grasp; for he shook hands with me as he had done on the day when Raoul de Gardefer and I had accompanied him to the diligence to see him starting on his exile and cheer him. Perhaps the grasp was even rather warmer and longer.

"Then you know this individual?" cried the beery citizen, who, to make some kind of amends for having half-throttled me, began fumbling my shirt-front with his hands, setting my cravat to rights, and trying to make me look reputable.

"Yes, I know him, and will answer for him under any circumstances." This Torreau said, without so much as knowing of what I was accused; but he reiterated his declaration when my crime was explained to him, and vouched for my being neither this nor that, nor anything else likely to injure the Sovereign People.

"Then we'll put it down that nothing has taken place, Citizen," said the beery Republican, shoving out a paw for me to shake. "*Vive la Commune! Vive le Citoyen Maillotin!*"

The cheers were taken up with tremendous energy by the citizens behind, who repeated them again and again. They even overdid it, and waxed prodigal of their own breath. But it was over at last, and with one cheer more for everybody in general not connected with reactionary machinations, they departed, treading on one another's heels, and leaving me alone with Torreau.

"Well," said I, turning to him, gratefully, "I may consider that I owe you a heavy debt."

"Oh, no," he replied, carelessly; "they would not have hurt you. They are a little rough, but very good fellows, and perfectly honest."

"Yes, honest enough," I answered, noticing, for the first time, that my pocket-book was missing.

"The people have been systematically maligned," continued Torreau. "It has been the interest of those who kept them under foot to paint them as brute beasts; but they are better than their oppressors."

"I hear that you are one of the leading spirits of this movement," I remarked, to change the subject.

"I am but a soldier in a great cause," said he, shortly. There was something of the suppressed exaltation of the fanatic in his tone. "Why do you look at me so gravely?" he added. "You have something you wish to say: you think I am riding with the wrong party?"

I suppose my look must have said more than my tongue, for he took me by the arm, led me towards the window, and, with a rapid gesture in the direction of some National Guardsmen, whom we could see cleaning their rifles in the square below, said, "See, there is a people who have been oppressed and enslaved ever since this country was an inhabited land. Their lot has been to bend the neck, to wallow, and to shed their blood, and that is all. In order that successive dynasties of kings might feast more richly, and carry their heads higher, these poor devils—famished, and beaten, and kept in the brutish belief that their kings were men of different clay to themselves—have fought that ghastly roll of battles which constitutes the history of France during fifteen centuries. One day the people rose and smashed the throne. Its pieces were picked up and nailed together again. They smashed it a second time, with a like result; and again a third. Three times the nation, after breaking its chains, was refettered; and now that once more we have broken our shackles, there are men who want to re-forged them and bind us anew. But we have had enough of it. France is not to be eternally bandied about, and ridden like a hack-mule by Bonapartes, Bourbons, and Orleanists, one after the other. The people will be their own masters now: work, study, live at peace, and be free. This is what we want, and all we want. What have you to say against us?"

He looked at me hungrily for a reply; but I had no time to give it, for a man with ink on his fingers and a pen in his mouth opened the door, and cried, "Citizen Maillotin, there's to be a sitting of the Commune. Are you coming?"

"Will you accompany me?" asked Torreau, evidently expecting that I was going to refuse. But I accepted. The sittings of the Commune were at that time open to only a very few privileged spectators, amongst whom no reporters were admitted. Torreau affirmed that he could pass me in, *if I liked*, laying a certain stress upon those words, as if he were not very certain that the proceedings would edify me. But I clung to my resolution; so that, having donned his insignia of office—a brilliant red sash, with a gold fringe, which he girt round his waist—he walked out after the man with the pen, and I followed him.

Along two or three corridors, and through a succession of chambers, all bearing more or less marks of the people's love of quiet work, study, and the rest of it, Torreau and I wended our way till we found ourselves facing the door of the ancient council-room, thronging around which were a number of men with fixed bayonets, who were lamentably unwashed, but who seemed to be acting as a guard of honour. They let us both through without asking questions, and in we marched.

Long before reaching the door our ears had been greeted by the yelling voice of a citizen, who was speaking under the effects of strong excitement or strong alcohol, and this gentleman was still on his legs when we were admitted to the view of him. The scene was made up of a long oval table, covered with a scarlet cloth, and surrounded by fifty-three scarlet chairs, about two-thirds of which were occupied. On the table, inkstands, pens, and paper for the use of the few, water-bottles, tumblers, and sugar-basins for the refreshment of the many. Hanging on the walls, superb picture-frames bereft of their canvas—ex-portraits of ex-potentates become exiles. At one end of the room a monster, and, from the artistic point of view, monstrous statue of the Republic, by a sculptor name unknown; and behind this statue, a panoply of crimson flags, with the rather sinister inscription on a scroll, "*GUERRE AUX TYRANS!*" On a row of chairs near the fretted marble chimney-piece, some half-a-dozen strangers, brought in, like myself, by members, and sitting dumb as fish.

Now, I had in my time frequented more than one popular assembly, and gathered the amusement that may generally be got out of those places of entertainment. Especially had I visited what are termed in Paris democratic socialist club debates, and had found enough to laugh at for a whole week after each visit. But this time it was quite another story. What were empty words at the clubs, were words that might be followed by deeds here; for the men who talked held a city of two million inhabitants in their hands, and were free to put into practice all or any of the amusing theories that might pass through their heads. So I took my seat in no great humour for merriment, but chiefly concerned to learn *de visà* who and what the men of the Commune were. I also hoped from my heart of hearts that I might be enabled to change my preconceived opinions respecting some of them; but I cannot say this hope was fulfilled.

The members kept sauntering in every other minute with a leisurely

gait, as if they were entering a café. Most of them were in uniforms profusely laced, and one had only to look at their faces for a single moment to gauge the whole worth of the Communal movement, its prospects, and its true signification. There was no Republicanism here—no, not so much as would have filled a nutshell. It was not equality he cared for, that limber workman, who had never worn out a set of tools, and who sat down making great play with his right hand, to show off an enormous diamond ring which had somehow got there. Not fraternity that had ever troubled him, that pale, swaggering, literary Bohemian, grown sour in writing books which nobody would read, and starting papers that no one would ever buy; and who came in, fanning himself ostentatiously with a cambric handkerchief redolent with musk at twenty yards off. As for liberty, it was not difficult to guess the definition which those gentlemen would give of that, the day when liberty began to criticize their little acts or clash with their little interests. A citizen whom I had heard of as most hot in favour of press freedom in the private journalist phase of his existence, proposed, in my hearing, that all newspapers should be suppressed except those conducted by members of the Commune, that is, his own and somebody else's, and I should be wrong if I were to state that this motion was received with any tokens of disfavour. That there were a few earnest men amongst the number nobody will gainsay. Jules Torreau was earnest, earnest and disinterested; and he had three or four congenial backers. But I think when we have said four we shall have gone as far as truth will allow. As for the rest, I may be misjudging them, but can only say that if they were zealous patriots devoted to their country's good, and with souls exempt from selfish musings, this did not show either in their looks or their costume, and least of all in their sentiments.

But I must do the Commune this justice—their deliberations were not wordy. The Citizen with the yelping voice spoke about ten minutes, and proved to be less excited than his manner implied; but after him spoke a number of his colleagues, who were content with their hundred words or so a-piece—strange abstemiousness, which first opened my eyes to the expeditious character of debates conducted in the absence of reporters. By the time the tenth spokesman had relieved his mind, most of the members had arrived, and some more spectators with them, so that the room was tolerably full. Amongst the last comers were the Generalissimo whom I had met in the morning, and whom equestrian exercise seemed to have made a little stiff, and his pretty morganatic spouse, who did me the honour of accepting the seat I offered her.

"Allow me to compliment you on your riding, Citoyenne," I remarked, by way of saying something.

"Ah, yes," she answered, with a little pout, "riding is better than stewing here. *On s'embête ici à quarante sous par tête.*"

"Do you ever speak?"

"Sometimes, when they pitch into Alphonse" (Alphonse was the

Generalissimo). "He has not got much of a head, Alphonse hasn't; so that when D. or P. or one of those gets jowling with him, he stands no chance unless I get up and take his part. It's against rules, and they cry to me to sit down, but I don't care for that."

"Of course not."

"No. The other day they wouldn't hear me, so I screamed till they did. It was that small fellow there with the grey beard, who had got hold of Alphonse, and was soaping his head for him, because Alphonse had lost two guns in his last sortie. Said I to him, 'If you'd had ten guns you'd have lost them; and if you'd had twenty you'd have lost them; and if you ever get a hundred you lose them; so there!'"

"And what did he say?"

"He was shut up; there was nothing to answer. Oh, I never stand nonsense, I don't, especially from such as he. Why, he's a dog-clipper; used to cut dogs' ears and tails and their hair. There's a trade for a man! When I was in the Quartier Latin, I used to pass him every morning as I went over the Pont des Arts with my work. But there, it's too bad, I declare; they've got hold of Alphonse again. I say, there, Citizen" (and she rose, extending her small white gloved hand with a riding-whip in it), "I wish you'd let the General alone. Why can't you hit some one else? You had your fling at him last time."

"Will you hold your tongue, Citoyenne?" angrily shouted the member who was presiding—the journalist D., no pleasant man to deal with, silent, gloomy, and cold, a Republican every inch.

"No, I shan't," retorted the Citoyenne, "until the Citizen Faggeaux holds his. What does he tell lies for?"

"Lies!" screamed the Citizen Faggeaux. "I'll prove 'em!"

"This sort of thing is disgraceful," exclaimed Jules Torreau, striking the table with his fist and biting his lips. "Citoyenne," he added, in a tone of voice much sharper and shriller than I should have expected of him, "the next time you interrupt the debates, I shall move that you be forbidden the room. You are not here at the Bal Bullier, but in a National Assembly."

"It was he who began," said the Citoyenne, sulkily, but a little cowed, for Jules Torreau seemed to exercise more prestige than anybody.

"Began or not began, you have no right to open your mouth," continued Torreau, excitedly; "and as for you, Citizen Podevin, I think you will feel it your duty soon to explain to the Commune how you came by your generalship. In the first hours of the insurrection a great many citizens seem to have created titles for themselves, and you are probably one of them. Nothing in your former profession fitted you for the part you wish to play, and this is no child's game we are engaged in. You have made three sorties, and been routed with loss. You have human lives to account for."

"I'm a general," exclaimed M. Podevin, in alarm and doggedly. "I will be a general."

"You are always bullying Alphonse," ejaculated the Citoyenne, with flashing eyes.

"Sit down, Thérèse," mumbled the Generalissimo.

"Well, it comes to this," proceeded Torreau, with firmness. "If we are to entrust our fate to everybody who thinks himself a soldier, our defence will last just a fortnight. We cannot help some civilians becoming generals, for the military men amongst us are few; but we can take our precautions against incapable men soliciting high posts for the idle gratification of their vanity. I shall, therefore, propose that every commander who is repulsed or loses guns shall be tried by court-martial, and, pending the sentence, be kept imprisoned." *

The Citizen Podevin made a most ugly face, and so did a few of his belaced colleagues; but the general sense of the meeting was with Torreau. Seeing this, Torreau stood up and said: "As an engineer I know what resistance can be offered by this fortified city if we are resolute and united and do our duty. But it is not only against incapable generals we have to guard; we must root up that spirit of vanity which is the foundation of every form of weakness and the mainspring of all bad actions. As a nation we have always been too fond of spangled clothes and empty titles: it is for us now, who are Republicans, to set the example of self-amendment. I would have a general dress like his soldiers, eat of their food, sleep on the same hard bed as they, and be distinguished from them only by his greater valour and superior learning."

A few of Torreau's friends intimated a grim and hearty assent, but this time the general sense of the meeting did not follow the orator. The citizens who wore embroidered tunics, gold sword-belts, and braided képis, looked at one another and then at their clothes, as though to ask what was the use of being under a Republic if such clothes and such men were not allowed to air themselves together. And this prevailing opinion found vent on this occasion through the mouth of the Citizen Christophe Bilia, an old acquaintance of mine of club celebrity, who replied with a not dissatisfied glance at his own bright raiment: "Under the Roman Republic, citizen generals did not dress like their soldiers. When they returned home in triumph after victory their costumes were of incomparable richness, and they even stained their faces purple."

"The world has not been marching onward for two thousand years, for us to imitate the mummeries of the ancients," was Torreau's answer, shot back like a dart from a bow. "Besides, you are talking of Rome in her decline. When Rome was a Republic her generals guided the plough like Cincinnatus."

The Citizen Christophe Bilia would have been glad to make a reply, but his classical education had been a little neglected, and he could only exclaim that one should look at a Republican's soul and not his trousers. The discussion was, however, prevented from going further by

* This law was afterwards passed by the Commune and very stringently executed.

the entry of a messenger who came in with a despatch from Neuilly and handed it to the President D. This gentleman opened it and read aloud:—

“NEUILLY.—*The Versailles troops came in great force to the outermost barricade this morning, and after two hours' fighting dislodged us. We lost two hundred killed and wounded and four hundred prisoners, also one mitrailleuse and four field-pieces. The men are much discouraged and complain that we are always left to fight the enemy at unequal odds. We stand in great need of reinforcements.*

“THE GENERAL NONPLUSKEL.”

There was a moment's silence, and then the President said: “I suppose we had better edit this in the usual way for the public,” and he amended the despatch as follows:—

“NEUILLY.—*The Royalist hordes came in great force to the outermost barricade this morning and were victoriously repulsed after two hours' hard fighting. Their losses are five hundred killed and wounded and seven hundred prisoners, also two mitrailleuses and eight field-pieces. Our own losses are three men slightly wounded. The Royalists are greatly discouraged, but amongst our men the warmest enthusiasm prevails. They routed the enemy to the cry of 'VIVE LA COMMUNE.'*

“THE GENERAL NONPLUSKEL.”

“Well,” said I, as half an hour later I was taking leave of Torreau at the door of the Hôtel-de-Ville, after he had obligingly given me a passport which would guarantee me against further molestation, “I suppose it will be of no more use for me to argue with you now than it used to be seven years ago?”

He shook his head.

“Why argue? justice is on our side. We ask for no more than we have a right to.”

“It is not your demands, Torreau, but your way of making them.”

“Sword in hand?” and his eye gleamed. “I tell you that nothing was ever wrested from the iron-handed classes but at the sword's point. Then, the opportunity led us on. When, again, should we have a hundred thousand working-men armed? But this is only the beginning. We have been beaten as yet. At our first victory all the great cities of France will rise and rally round us.”

“And if the victory should not come?”

“Oh, then——” He turned his eyes full on me, and touching his breast with a slight, simple gesture, said: “I have sacrificed my life beforehand, if that is what you mean.”

Honest Torreau! Your motives have been weighed by this time in higher courts than those where human judges sit. You have been arraigned

and have pleaded. And surely in that Great Book where the final verdict on men's lives is inscribed, an Arbiter more impartial than we has written: Not Guilty.

V.

The gloomy drama of the Second Siege of Paris continued—its termination being not hard to foresee, its incidents becoming daily more interesting to watch, as the insurgents at bay saw the death circle growing closer each hour around them, and recognized that there was no path of escape. I followed with painful anxiety my friend Torreau's course during this wretched time, perceived him losing his hold of the shaggy multitude who had never but in a very half-hearted way deferred to the guidance of him and his moderate friends; and I heard of him struggling to the end with a sort of desperation, that the reins might not altogether slip from his hands. It was noticed that none of the decrees relating to executions or demolitions, or arbitrary arrests, bore his signature. He would have had his revolution be blameless. He said so, repeated it, found accents of wildest eloquence in which to adjure his colleagues not to disgrace the cause for which they were fighting; and, as invariably happens, when men will not let themselves be carried along by the torrent which they have let loose, lost his popularity, was accused of being lukewarm, then a traitor, and at last could no longer open his mouth without having the foulest insults flung into his teeth. I used to see caricatures of him in the Communal comic prints, representing him gibbeted or set in a pillory; that noble organ, the *Père Duchêne*, clamoured that he might be shot; and one day I met him, looking so fagged, care-worn and despondent, that pale as I had always known him in other times, he now seemed but the ghost of his former self.

"You must resign," I said: "the movement has got beyond your control. People must not be able to fix any part of the responsibility of what is being done now, or will be done, on you."

"No," answered he sadly, but resolutely, "I must remain till the catastrophe. I cast in my lot with the movement; I have no right to abandon it in its last hours. Perhaps I may be able to do some good—prevent some evil, I mean, that is the most I can expect now."

I endeavoured to shake his resolution, and alluded, amongst other things, to the hostages, whom the insurgent sheets were threatening every morning with death. He stopped me agitatedly, and exclaimed: "You must not believe that. Oh, great God! no, it would be too horrible. Those men talk worse than they mean. No Frenchman would do that," and he pressed his hand to his forehead.

Almost immediately he added, with some eagerness: "I was able to save two hostages. I got them liberated before it was known to the papers that they had been arrested, else I should never have been able to manage it."

"Who were they?"

He hesitated before replying, and coloured slightly as he did so : "Two old friends, or old foes of mine, who happened to be in Paris : M. de Feucontenu and M. Nul."

This was the last time but one that I saw him. The last time of all was some ten days later, in the closing week of May. The Versailles troops had been in Paris since the Sunday evening, and were already masters of more than half the town. Who that saw it can ever forget that week ? The unspeakable horror of the battles in the streets, the resistance, the massacres, and, worse than all, those appalling fires that turned the sky to a blood-red over the distracted city, and made people think that the end of time itself was at hand ! The quarter in which I lived was one of the first to be taken. Bullets and shells crashed past our windows, carrying away great fragments of balconies, huge masses of stone, and reducing many houses to a condition of smoking ruins. It was only by a sort of miracle that the particular roof under which I was sheltered was spared ; and when I say spared, I simply mean that it was left standing. As to its condition, it looked as if it had stood an entire siege by itself. When I was told that I might at length go out without being taken between two fires, I descended, and found the threshold of our *portacochère* covered with a great pool of blood, which the porter's wife was going to wash away with buckets of water and mop ; and—ghastly and never-to-be-forgotten sight—three men sitting in a row, cold and stark, propped up by the porter's door, and with great holes in their faces and chests, showing where bullets had struck them. They had been shot in our very yard, for trying to burn the house, and, in fact, the whole street. The porter had then seated them in a row, in order, he said, to act as a warning. Just outside the house a woman stretched out on her face dead. Further on, eleven men in one red heap. At the street corner, corpses in such number that a pile of them had been made on each side of the roadway to allow people room to pass between. The mud in this roadway was purple, and the walls were spattered with blood, as if it had been done with a brush.

I hurried on and saw a public-house, which was deserted. A bullet had struck the owner, a woman, behind her pewter counter, and she sat with half her body extended over it and her arms hanging down. In her fall she had upset a copper pitcher of wine, which crimsoned the floor. In this house there was a birdcage with a bullfinch in it. The cage had had no harm, and the bullfinch was singing.

Coming to an open place where four roads met, a sentinel cried to me to pass to the left. On the right were the remnants of a barricade that had held out for six hours, and in front of that barricade, 127 dead bodies, heaped up into a hillock. On the top of this heap was stretched out, stiff and white, a woman in a riding-habit, and with her long silky hair horribly dagged by a wound which had carried half her forehead away. It was the young mistress of the General or Citizen Podevin, whom I had met in such spirits and beauty a few weeks before ; and the Citizen Podevin himself I saw lying dead close to her.

All this was so abominably shocking that I fled forward, looking neither to the right or left of me. What I wanted was to find Torreau, to offer him a shelter, and keep him hidden until he should be safe, or until he could find means of leaving the country. He had given me his address, which was a good two miles from mine, but in the quieter part of the town, so that I had a hope that no great resistance had been offered there, and that the soldiers would, consequently, be less ferocious than where I lived. In this I was not altogether disappointed. The quarter had been attacked the same day as ours, but there had been few barricades. However, I did not find Torreau at his house. He had not been seen there since early the day before. "You had better look for him at the Hôtel-de-Ville," said his *conciérge*, with some irony; and I took his advice to this extent, that I set off towards the Rue de Rivoli. "If I am to find him, chance will help me," I reasoned.

Chance *did* help me. I had not gone half a mile when Torreau came running almost against me down a small slum leading out from a main street. *His hair had turned grey.* In his right hand he held a revolver, and round his waist shone his scarlet sash.

I thought he was flying from pursuers, and exclaimed,—“Good God, take that sash off and throw your revolver away. Here, take my arm, quick.”

“No, no, leave me,” he cried wildly. “You see what it has come to.” (He was gesticulating in a frenzy of exaltation.) “They’ve butchered, burned, plundered—they, the men of the Commune! They’ve dishonoured the Republic! France’s curse will be upon them for ever—and on me! Let me go, I say! I won’t outlive it. Let me go!”

I clung to him as he was bolting; closed with him, and tried to wrench the revolver from his hand. But he resisted with desperation. “Let me go,” he shrieked. “Don’t be mad!” I cried. “You’ve a sister and relatives in the world; you’ve no right to throw away your life. Torreau! Jules! for God’s sake, man, have pity on yourself and on me.” He sobbed in anguish and resisted the more. I could feel his hot tears dropping on my hands as I forced his arm up, and strove, by exerting all my strength, to make him loosen his hold. “Quick, Torreau! man, I implore you.” I gasped, for the tramping sound of soldiers running at a double, suddenly became audible. He set his teeth and continued to grasp the weapon tighter. I clenched my fist, lifted my arm, and struck him sharply under the elbow. The revolver dropped. But it was too late. A company of cavalry soldiers, with an officer at their head, debouched suddenly on our left, and, in a ringing voice, the officer cried, “Stand!”

The officer was Raoul de Gardefer. He recognized Jules Torreau on the spot, and Torreau recognized him. Of the two, one turned pale, and that one was not Jules Torreau.

The soldiers had already drawn themselves up in a double line, and

had loaded their rifles. Raoul de Gardefer would not have saved his former friend if he had gone down on his knees to do it. The soldiers bore carnage in their eyes. Besides, their case was hopeless. Jules' sash was still upon him, and waving his hat above his head, three times he shouted, "*Vive la Commune !*"

This done, he threw his hat, with an appeased look, on the ground, put his back to the wall and crossed his arms on his chest. The soldiers rapped the butt-ends of their rifles on the paving-stones, as if to call on their officer to be quick.

Raoul de Gardefer stepped aside and opened his lips—once, twice—but without speaking. He was ghastly white.

Then Torreau looked at him.

And seeing his lips quiver, something like a flush of emotion stole over Torreau's face; and for the first time since I had known him a faint smile lit up his features.

He slightly bent his head towards Raoul. It was the homage of a dying man to a man who has pitied him.

Then he faced the soldiers again, drew himself to his full height, and in a clear fine voice, without a quaver in it, gave the word of command himself:—"Attention !" he cried. "Make ready. Present," and as twelve rifles rose to a level with his chest, he shouted for the last time,—"*Vive la République !*"

"*C'est égal,*" said one of the soldiers, with a look at the body. "*C'était un brave.*"

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Oliver Van Noort.

THE Papal grants of all new lands to Spain and Portugal originated the maxim, "No peace beyond the line;" and the fierce anti-Protestantism of Philip II., aided by the intrigues of the Jesuits, nursed it into that strength of constitution which carried it through three centuries of most eventful life. The Calvinists of Rochelle asserted it vigorously, and so did our own countrymen. But its most signal illustrators—that is, prior to the appearance of the Buccaneers—were decidedly the Dutch mariners. And of this hardy race, as good a representative man as any was Oliver Van Noort. Oliver sailed from Holland on the 13th of September, 1598, with the ships *Maurice* and *Frederick-Henry*, of some 800 tons burden each, and the yachts *Concord* and *Hope*, of 50 to 60 tons apiece, the whole carrying 250 men. These vessels were excellent sea-boats in their way. They could bear a good deal of tossing and tumbling, and even take the ground occasionally without suffering any particular damage. But their sailing qualities were not brilliant. They made, in fact, the minimum of headway when the wind was aft, and the maximum of leeway when it happened to be abeam. So it was no uncommon thing for the best Dutch pilots to find themselves erring in their reckoning by more than 100 leagues in the course of a moderately long voyage.* The earlier Netherlandish attempts at circumnavigation were, therefore, curious enough, bearing no small resemblance to the performance of the Chinese junk which, steering straight for London, managed to reach New York. Indeed, considering their incomprehensible courses, their gropings in the dark, and their capacity for hitting every port but the right one, it would have been wonderful if that satire on their maritime achievements—the legend of the *Flying Dutchman*—had not been invented by the wits of the seventeenth century.

The character of Van Noort's expedition will be best explained by the instructions he received from his merchant-owners, which ran substantially as follows:—"You will enter the Pacific through the Straits of Magellan, and return to Europe round the Cape of Good Hope. Fill up, if you can, with Spanish treasure on the coast of Peru. If that be impossible, stretch across to the Moluccas, and trade for spices. Make discoveries if they come in your way, but waste no time in hunting them up. Finally, maintain discipline, keep an eye

* Better navigators were often as much mistaken. "Nous fûmes bien étonnez de voir devant nous l'isle de Corvo. Nos pilotes croyoient être au dela de pres de cent lieues."—*Jesuit Voyage to Siam*.

to the profits, be as pious as circumstances will allow, and God be with you. Amen."

To enable the commander to carry out his instructions, he was provided with a "consoler of the sick" (chaplain), a large stock of small wares, a still larger stock of arms, a little money, and unlimited powers over his crews. The last item was not at all unnecessary. In those days voyages round the world were desperate undertakings, and few but desperate characters engaged in them. Maritime discipline, therefore, stern as it always was in the good old times, was doubly stern in cases like the present. It comprehended the harsher rules of the old Northern sea-codes, with occasional articles borrowed from the usages current in the Mediterranean; it multiplied offences to an astonishing extent; and it inflicted an endless variety of punishments—many of them as cruel as they were singular. There was, for instance, plenty of keel-hauling and spread-eagling; there was an ugly custom of suspending a man by the arms, and loading his neck with weights, until, as Sir William Monson expresses it, "his back and his heart were ready to break;" and there were gagging for the insolent, fasting for the obstinate, ducking for the sloven, and whipping at the capstan for the skulker. He who was detected in falsehood had to serve for a week as swabber's assistant, and the swearer was liable—but only under very Puritanic captains—to have his tongue well scraped with a rusty piece of iron. Heavier crimes than these were visited with heavier penalties—such as marooning and death—the latter being inflicted in a great variety of ways.

The squadron called at Plymouth, on account of the English pilot, Mellish, a man who had already circumnavigated the globe with Cavendish. Next night, six men, disgusted with the discipline, crept into a launch that was towing astern, and got clear off. Near the Berlings, a dangerous reef in the neighbourhood of Cape Rocca, all who had not previously passed the spot were triced up to one of the yard-arms, and dipped three times in the sea. That is, if common seamen; for an officer was always honoured with a fourth immersion and a gun. Ceremonies like this, though now confined to the tropic of Cancer, were observed in many places by mediæval shipmen, there being hardly a shoal or promontory notorious for shipwreck in Western Europe that was not thus respected. The rites too were little if at all farcical, but gave sufficient evidence of their origin in those pagan times, when every dreaded locality was supposed to be haunted by a demon whom it was necessary thus to propitiate. The custom, indeed, had lost its religious character long previous to the sixteenth century. It continued, however, to be kept up as the marine equivalent for the forms with which artisans were made free of their respective guilds—no seaman being accounted master of his craft, and fitted to take office on shipboard, until he had undergone it.

Of course the squadron could not traverse the Atlantic without making a few halts by the way. Accordingly, on the 10th of December we find it

in sight of Prince's Island, at the head of the Bight of Biafra. This was a Portuguese settlement, but not a very important one, as it contained merely a small fort, a sugar-mill, a few European soldiers, and several Jesuits. The natives, however, were numerous, and completely under the control of the missionaries. Van Noort therefore received from them just such treatment as the Jesuit converts of that day were in the habit of according to heretical visitors. Being greatly in want of water, he sent a party ashore with a flag of truce. The natives met it under a similar banner, and behaved very amicably until they had decoyed four of the officers into the fort, and thrown the rest of the company off their guard. They then assailed both parties, killing three of the officers, including the Englishman Mellish, and two of the seamen, and driving the rest off to the ships. In retaliation Van Noort laid the *Concord* close under the fort, and landed 120 picked men to take it in the rear. The assailants, however, were overmatched at all points, and compelled to retreat with the loss of one man killed and fourteen wounded. The squadron instantly made sail and stood away, amid the exulting yells of the Jesuit neophytes. But this rejoicing was a little premature. Like another of the name, Oliver was not the man to put up with a defeat—so long as there was a chance of turning it into a victory. Instead, then, of showing his stern to the islanders, he manœuvred along the coast for the next thirty-six hours. A mob of negroes in full war-costume followed his movements with much pertinacity and more clamour. They indulged in a variety of war-dances on the various headlands, and treated him to a volley of arrows whenever he tacked within range. But even savage endurance has its limits, and these gentle Christians paused at length, exhausted and bewildered, towards sunset of the second day. Van Noort seized the opportunity, anchored suddenly abreast of a rivulet, and threw thirty men ashore, who soon raised a tolerable entrenchment. It was midnight before the natives discovered the work, and then they mustered and assailed it. The scene was sufficiently striking. Here the black ships rocked on the glittering sea, for the moon was at the full; there the hillock spouted forth its lightnings; and yonder the dense woods disgorged a crowd of shrieking phantoms. The assault encountered a sharp repulse; it was not repeated; and the water-casks of the squadron were filled at leisure. When this was done, Van Noort put himself at the head of 150 men, and advanced into the island. On the way he beat up an ambuscade with considerable loss to those who lay in wait therein. He then burnt the sugar-mills, and did as much other mischief as he conveniently could before he returned to his ships. The squadron hovered about the place for four days longer, landing frequently, killing the natives wherever they met them, and pillaging and destroying their villages. At length having glutted their vengeance, and laid up a plentiful stock of annoyance for the next comers, the Dutch made sail, on the 17th of December, for Cape Lopez.

They reached that point on Christmas Day, and there one of their pilots, a native of Heligoland, who had been convicted of offences "too

numerous to mention," was marooned—that is, sent ashore with a musket, a few charges, and a bag of bread. This marooning was a very uncertain sort of punishment. Besides being inflicted for a variety of misdeeds great and small, the rule of the sea laid it down that it was to take place on the first land encountered after the passing of the sentence. It need hardly be remarked, then, that it bore very unequally on crime and criminals. It might place a comparatively innocent man on a barren rock, or among "the anthropophagi who do each other eat" only when they cannot procure a stranger to devour; and it might deposit an accomplished scoundrel in positive safety. The pilot, however, though unquestionably a scoundrel, was not exactly one of the fortunate victims of marooning. Cape Lopez is fearfully pestilential. Moreover, the natives, then as now, believed that—borrowing the words of one of their chiefs,—“who kill shark—him go dam; but who shark eat—him go comartable.” And as they were in the habit of offering human sacrifices to these monsters, it is highly probable that the Heligolander closed his career by going “comartable.”

Sailing again on the 26th of December, they entered the harbour of Rio after a passage of forty-five days, which was not a bad performance. Rio was already a powerful settlement, and therefore a dangerous anchorage for so weak a squadron. Of this, however, the Dutch had small suspicion—thanks to the obscurity in which the peninsular races delighted to shroud their trans-oceanic doings. The governor did not attack them—probably because they remained at anchor well out of range of his heavy batteries—but he refused to supply their wants, or, indeed, to have anything at all to do with them in an amicable way. Nevertheless they allowed an envoy from the shore to remain on board the *Maurice*, where he soon wormed himself completely into their confidence. Under his direction they attempted a landing, and fell into an ambuscade, from which they extricated themselves with the loss of one man killed, two taken prisoners, and eight wounded. These last were subjected to a singular process, much in vogue among sea-goers, and known under the name of psalming. It was a very simple matter. The missile was extracted, and the hurt anointed while somebody read a psalm—in St. Jerome's Latin, of course,—over the patient. Strange to say, this remedy proved quite as effectual as others more approved of by the faculty. The captives were returned in a day or two with the view of tempting the Dutch into some further imprudence. But by this time their eyes were somewhat opened, and the bait failed. Finding that no good was to be gained by remaining in Rio, Van Noort dismissed his Portuguese adviser, whose true character he does not seem to have suspected, and left the harbour. He cruised among the neighbouring islands for a fortnight longer—fowling, fishing, gathering herbs, and collecting water. On the 27th of February, 1599, six men paddled in a canoe to the mainland, where they were attacked by a troop of Indians, who slew two and carried off the others,—probably to eat them. This loss Van Noort

seems to have regarded as a hint to take himself off, for he instantly made sail.

The squadron steered southward for three weeks. But being obstructed by contrary winds and harassed by frequent storms, they made little progress. A council then decided that they should go northward again, since the lateness of the season, their small stock of provisions, the foulness of the ships, and the sickness of the crews rendered it impossible for them to pass the straits before winter. Northward, accordingly, they steered for St. Helena. But after beating about for twenty days, they found that they could not make the island. They then went in search of the Martin Vas rocks, and missed them too. Afterwards they started in chase of a certain mythic island called Portuguese Ascension, which has long since disappeared from the charts of the Atlantic; but of course they never caught sight of it. During this uncertain navigation, disease spread fearfully among the crews, three or four of them, on an average, dying every day. At last they sighted land on the 21st of April. It was one of the Martin Vas rocks, but this they did not know. Its appearance, however, was so repulsive that they bore away to the westward, pursued by a troop of sharks. On the 30th they saw the mainland near the Rio Douce, and attempted to go ashore. The Portuguese, however, mustered in force to oppose them; so they put to sea again, with heavy hearts. Two days later they reached an islet about a league in circuit, and as much from the continent. It was not an inviting spot, containing only a few palm-trees, a little herbage, and a scanty supply of water. But they had no alternative. So they anchored, and hurried the sick ashore, several of them dying on the way. The change proved eminently beneficial. Within fifteen days, all but five of the worst cases were perfectly well.

At this islet they dismantled, and burnt one of the yachts, which had become unseaworthy. Here, too, a sailor of Vlissingen, who had wounded the pilot of his ship with a knife, was subjected to the *lex talionis*, his left hand being bound behind him, and his right fastened over his head to the mainmast with the blade that had dealt the blow. The weapon was driven edge uppermost through the palm deep into the wood, and there the culprit was to remain until he should muster nerve enough to wrench his hand clear—a punishment sickening to think of, but, for all that, of daily occurrence among ancient mariners.

They sailed south again on the 21st of June, and reached the neighbourhood of Rio by the 30th. There they spent a fortnight taking in wood and water, without seeing, or being seen, by the Portuguese. On the 20th of September they entered Port Desire, in Patagonia, and taking advantage of the first spring-tide, laid their vessels high and dry on the beach. Necessary repairs, and the capture of seals and penguins for sea-stores, occupied them pretty closely for another month, during which they saw nothing of the natives. The latter was annoying, for the hope of seeing the giants—11 feet high, according to report—was one of the great attractions of the voyage. At last, on the 20th of October, they caught

sight of a group of Patagonians looming extremely large through a thin mist on the other side of the harbour. Two boats, with Van Noort himself as leader, went in chase; but, by the time the northern shore was gained, the Patagonians had vanished. Leaving five men in charge of the boats, Van Noort started with the remainder to scour the country. Towards nightfall he returned, disappointed and weary, to find that the Patagonians had visited the boats before him. The men in charge had been strictly enjoined to keep afloat out of harm's way, and for a time they had obeyed the order. It was bitter cold, however, and as the coast seemed clear, they thought they might venture ashore to warm their benumbed limbs with a run; and a sharp run they very soon got, stumbling at once into the midst of a group of Patagonians, who seemed to have risen out of the earth. Only two of the seamen—one severely wounded—succeeded in regaining the boats. The other three were found dead on the strand, stuck all over with arrows. Nor, while lamenting the mishap, could their comrades refrain from admiring the vigour with which the barbarian shafts had been propelled, most of them having pierced the victims from side to side. This was their first and last view of the giants.

Nine days afterwards they sailed again, anchoring on the 5th of November under Cape Virgin, at the eastern entrance of Magellan's Straits. This celebrated pass was decidedly the leading plague of old-world navigators. The Norwegian maelstrom had been something of a terror in its time; so had Cape Raz and its pretty little cluster of man-traps, the Penmarks; while the stormy promontory had couched for generations, like a nightmare, on the breast of naval enterprise. But Magellan reduced all these to comparative insignificance. No sooner had the channel that bears his name been discovered, than it took its place at once and for ever as, *par excellence*, the bogey of the seas. Modern experience, indeed, has shorn it of many terrors. But with its gloomy shores, its labyrinthine windings, its incomprehensible winds, and still more tantalizing currents, it is still sufficiently formidable. It opens about the centre of the bay of which Cape Virgin forms the northern extremity. The entrance is a narrow pass, running east and west some three miles across, and about ten in length. This pass ends in a circular gulf, measuring thirty miles or thereabouts from side to side. In the western side of this gulf opens a second gut very similar to the first. And from thence the channel flows like a mighty river—southward for one hundred miles, and west-north-westward for nigh two hundred more, until it terminates among the numerous islands that rise like a barrier between it and the Pacific.

The Dutchmen spent just twenty days in attempting to gain the first pass, entering it no less than four times—to be as often blown out again. Here commenced a quarrel between Van Noort and his second in command, Jacob Klaus, which was destined to end very seriously for the latter. The principal attributed most of his failures to his second, who hung back

when he should have pressed forward, refused to assist the *Maurice* on more occasions than one, met remonstrance with insolence, and wound up by denying his chief's authority in writing. Van Noort was not the man to be treated thus with impunity, but he felt that it was no time to deal with such a matter, while involved in the difficulties of the passage. So he bridled his temper, put the letter aside, and bided his time.

The squadron cleared the first pass on the 25th of November, and the second twenty-four hours later. Thenceforward the navigation was comparatively easy. The vessels were beaten indeed by storms and impeded by currents, and made but slow progress. Still they went forward; and never again had they to wrestle so fiercely with the winds and seas of the Straits as at their entrance. On the 27th of November the adventurers won a victory that did them little honour. Discovering a small tribe of Fuegians on one of the islands, they landed and stormed their den—a cavern half-way up a cliff that rose by the verge of the sea. The men of the tribe attempted to bar the ascent, but they were soon driven in. As the Dutch thronged fiercely after them the native women heaped their children in a corner, and flung themselves as a rampart before them, while the warriors formed a line between them and the foe. And well and valiantly did these poor savages make head against the better weapons and superior numbers of the Europeans. Not one of them lowered his hand, or cried for quarter, or yielded an inch. They struggled to the end, and fell where they fought; the fray closed only with the slaughter of the last of them. Then it was found that many of the women and children had been slain or wounded by random strokes. As for the Hollanders, four of them were hurt, and these but slightly. What followed in the bloody cave is not told. Perhaps it is as well. These Europeans were the fiercest specimens of a fierce generation—a hard-hearted race who set little store by human life at any time, and with whom a savage was an animal of much the same estimation as a wolf. They returned to their ships, carrying with them six of the children.

In a few days more they met another celebrated navigator—Sebald de Wart—who was crossing from the Pacific. And shortly afterwards the second in command filled up the measure of his offences by weighing anchor without consulting his chief, and carrying a press of sail until he had run out of sight. On the 22nd of December Van Noort parted company with De Wart; and on Christmas Day he overtook the run-away. On the 29th he called a council, which placed the delinquent in close arrest. The trial took place three weeks later at their last anchorage in the Straits, and the vice-admiral was sentenced to be marooned. This sentence was carried out on the 26th of February, 1600, with such rigour, that, says the chronicler of the expedition, “in a very few days he must infallibly have died of famine, or been devoured by the savages,”—who, we may remark, really had surprised, and, as it was supposed, eaten two seamen not many days before. The execution was followed by solemn prayer; and this, in turn, by an exhortation in which the event was

duly "improved." Then the anchors weighed, and the ships pursued their remorseless course from the doomed man on the beach. They entered the South Seas on the last day of February, 1600, having spent nearly three months in the Straits. They had then 147 men, all told, left.

Northward they sped before the southern gale that appears perpetual on that coast, making good progress, and suffering no mishap for a fortnight. On the morning of the 12th of March, however, only two of the ships, the *Maurice* and the *Concord*, were to "be seen" together. The *Frederick-Henry* had disappeared during the night—and for ever. There were many speculations as to her fate. Some supposed that she foundered during the darkness; others that she had gone to pieces on the iron-bound coast; and not a few that she had returned southwards in search of the deserted vice-admiral. Van Noort wasted no time in seeking her. He did not even touch at the appointed rendezvous, or suffer her absence to make any change in his plans, but went forward as steadily and boldly as ever to harry the whole coast of Spanish America with somewhat less than 100 men.

Nine days after he reached the Island of Mocha, off the southern extremity of Chili. Here a man sentenced to be marooned, accepting an alternative occasionally offered to such criminals, ventured with a few glittering trifles among the natives, and as he happened to escape from the ordeal with his life, he received his pardon, according to the custom of the sea. The intercourse thus opened Van Noort maintained so long as he remained in the neighbourhood. He made several remarks on the people and their habits, sufficiently curious at that period, but hardly worth repeating now; with the following exception perhaps:—He says that they were divided into tribes, each of which dwelt in a gathering of hovels termed by courtesy a town; that they were much addicted to a species of strong drink prepared from maize by a process odious to European delicacy; and that they were lively, "sociable," and loving one another—having only one small drawback—a propensity to homicide when under the influence of their favourite liquor. These "peculiarities," by the way, appear to us not altogether peculiar to the men of Mocha.

Van Noort took leave of these rollicking innocents on the 24th of March, and caught sight of a small vessel near the shore the same evening. He went in pursuit, and a pretty chase she led him: dashing between rocks on a level with the water's edge, across dangerous sands, up deep inlets and round all sorts of awkward headlands, finally adopting the manœuvre that of all others the heavy Dutchmen most detested—hugging the wind. So she led and so they followed through the whole of that night, while beacon after beacon flared up along the coast apprising all whom it might concern that there were marauders abroad. Towards nine o'clock next morning the yacht managed to get near enough to exchange shots with the chase, which allowed itself to be drawn into a fight. This gave time for the *Maurice* to come, and then the Spaniards surrendered. The prize was called *The Good Jesus*, and proved to be a

king's ship, which had been employed to cruise along the coast, in a great measure with the purpose of being taken by the Dutch if she failed to involve them in destruction during the chase. For it appeared that the Creoles had been apprised of Van Noort's expedition early in the preceding year, and were by this time fully prepared to receive them. But this he did not learn until a later period. One thing, however, he did learn that interested him greatly—that there were then several Dutch prisoners in Lima. These were the poor remainder of the crews of two stout vessels which had touched some months before at a port in southern Chili. There the Araucanians, mistaking them for Spaniards, surprised them and cut off the greater number of the mariners. The Indians, according to their custom, made flutes of the thigh-bones of their victims and drinking-cups of the skulls. The survivors, but nine in all, fell shortly afterwards into the hands of the Spaniards, who treated them little if at all better. Van Noort left the coast before he could ascertain their fate. What that was, however, may be surmised from the method which Transatlantic Spaniards and Portuguese were then in the habit of adopting with heretical marauders. It is described with unction by Ovaglie Vasconcellas and the authors of the *Life of Anchieta*, all Jesuit writers, and was as follows:—The captives were shut up in a dismal prison and worried with monks until they declared themselves converted. Then, solely with a view to their eternal welfare, they were hanged while the odour of sanctity was fresh upon them, and thus kept from forfeiting paradise by relapse into heresy.

With a view of procuring better treatment for his countrymen, Van Noort released most of his prisoners. The Spaniards, in return, displayed a specimen of the treachery which, by the close of Philip's reign, had become indurated in the nature of their public men. They sent the Dutch an ambassador, who was instructed to detain them in a situation favourable for attack until an overwhelming force could be concentrated against them. The envoy, however, allowed the design to ooze out, and the plot failed. Van Noort instantly resumed hostilities. At Valparaiso, in those days a paltry village, he destroyed three ships and took possession of a fourth. In the last his men encountered some slight resistance which they did not regret, since it gave them an excuse for destroying the greater portion of the crew, whose numbers might otherwise have proved inconvenient to feed and watch. None of the prizes contained anything that could be turned to the advantage of the owners of the squadron. The case was rather different with the captors, but how the latter fared will be best explained by a short notice of the marine usages of our ancestors in matters of pillage. These usages were very precise, fixing beyond dispute the destination of every article that could possibly change hands in a sea-fight. The hull and cargo of the captured ships were to be turned into money. A certain proportion of this, from a fifth to a twentieth, went to the government. The remainder was then divided into three equal parts, one of which was assigned to the owner of the

conquering ship, another to those who had equipped her, and the third to her officers and crew. Loose pillage,—that is, the personal effects of the vanquished,—fell to the victors, each officer having the privilege of rifling an officer of equal rank, while the common men became the prey of the first who happened to lay violent hands on them. Besides this, the choicest of the sails, spars, and arms were assigned to certain individuals. The captain, for instance, was to have the best piece of artillery and the gunner the second best; the finest cable was to belong to the pilot, and so on.

By the 5th of April the squadron was off Huasco. There, finding the Spaniards too strictly on their guard to give him any hope of further plunder, Van Noort determined to quit the American coast. So, detaining the Spanish pilot of *The Good Jesus*, two black slaves, and two Mulatto youths, he sent the rest of the prisoners away in the last prize, and sailed for Asia with three ships. Next morning old sea law was sharply vindicated. A seaman was found guilty of pilfering a bottle of oil from the stores and a little bread from some of his comrades. Theft like this was a grave offence in the eyes of those "who went down to the sea in ships" three hundred years ago. Its usual punishment was shaving the offender's head, smearing it with hot pitch, and sticking it over with feathers, after which the culprit was marooned. This custom was departed from in the present instance, probably because the ships were entering on a voyage during which they were not likely to see land for several months. A rope being passed under the poor wretch's arms, he was hauled up to the end of the foreyard, and shot to death.

Three other weeks passed eventless; but towards the end of the fourth the Dutch heard something that annoyed them for many a day. One of the black slaves averred that *The Good Jesus* had been employed to convey gold from the South to Lima, and that at the very time when the *Maurice* and the *Concord* hove in sight, there were no less than 11,000 lbs. weight of the precious metal on board, every ounce of which had been cast into the ocean by order of the captain. This story spread much wrathful excitement among the privateers, and in order to verify it, the rest of the captives were at once put to the torture. How this was done we are not informed, but it is not difficult to guess. Though racks were not unusual in the ships of that period, there were none in the *Maurice* or the *Concord*. But seamen are clever at expedients, and they had at least a score of substitutes for the mischievous engines with which confession was wont to be wrenched forth ashore. Conspicuous among these was the trick of suspending the victim face downwards by means of strong cords attached to his thumbs and great toes, and then placing a heavy weight on his back and a pot of burning brimstone under his nostrils. Tying a man to a spar and singeing his beard, or his cheek if he had no beard, with a slow match, was also much practised. And perhaps as effectual, in the long run, as either, was the barrel. Here the subject to be operated upon was placed in a cask, his arms being kept at

fu stretch through holes in the sides, his legs projected through similar holes in the bottom, and his head through another in the top. In this situation the poor fellow was retained until he thought fit to disclose his secrets. In the present instance the torture was neither long nor violent. The prisoners spoke immediately, and, to the chagrin of the Dutch, every one of them confirmed the story. The pilot added that he meant to have taken no small share in a certain plot for the destruction of the squadron, which has been mentioned. This bit of communication was unfortunate for him. Worse still, in the strict examination to which the captors immediately subjected *The Good Jesus* and all her belongings, including the pilot himself, they found exactly a pound of gold stowed away in the lining of his nether garment. From that hour the Hollanders regarded themselves as deeply-injured men, and the Spaniards as a nation of rascally cheats, of whom the pilot was a fair and therefore thoroughly hateful specimen. The man, in short, was doomed. Four weeks after he was charged with asserting that the Dutch had attempted to poison him. It was added that he had sought to get up a conspiracy amongst his fellow-prisoners—a charge, considering the number of these prisoners, almost as absurd as the other. But ridiculous as the accusation was, it sufficed. The pilot was brought to trial thereon, convicted of course, and thrown into the sea with a couple of heavy shot tied to his legs.

In another month the helm of *The Good Jesus* broke from its fastenings, and as the bark had been leaking frequently for some time, this accident determined them to destroy her, which they did. At last, on the morning of the 15th of September, after a voyage of four months, they reached the Ladrões. There they procured a much needed supply of provisions and water, and verified the character which preceding navigators had assigned to the islanders. Indeed their arrant knavery utterly amazed the honest Dutchmen. Resuming their course for the Philippines, they breasted Cape Espiritu Santo on the 14th of October. They cruised about the neighbouring seas for the next two months, finding the natives of the Philippines a gentle race, whom the Spaniards left pretty much to themselves—a few priests and tax-gatherers scantily distributed through their villages sufficing to keep them in order. For a week or two the Dutch, pretending to be Spaniards, did a profitable trade with them. Then the character of their visitors oozing out, the islanders avoided the ships, and nothing more was to be obtained except by force, which Van Noort was not slow to employ. He threw parties ashore in all quarters, shot down the natives when they resisted, and burnt and pillaged to any extent. And he did much the same on the ocean—stopping every sail he met, no matter what its nationality, and helping himself with small scruple to the cargo. Spanish bottoms he invariably destroyed; the others he generally dismissed, detaining, however, the pilots if he suspected them to be skilful. In this kind of warfare he gained a few recruits, and lost several officers and men that he could ill spare. Five of the latter were murdered by the crew of a Chinese junk, with whose lading they had been

taking liberties. But decidedly the comrade most regretted by the seamen of the *Maurice* was Master John Calloway, musician, of London. This worthy in character and career was quite a curiosity. Born under a hedge somewhere near Shepherd's Bush, he had been reared in Alsatia, where he had learnt to play the violin, and to cut a caper, a purse, or a throat, with about equal dexterity. After a youth of fiddling, brawling, and stealing in the metropolis, he found his way to Holland, in one of those troops of volunteers of villanous character with which Great Britain has so long been in the habit of accommodating her neighbours. After due experience of the wars—running the gauntlet half-a-dozen times, and escaping the gallows twice,—on one occasion by throwing dice for his life with a fellow-reprobate and winning the cast, and on another by turning hangman himself: he had finally taken service with Van Noort, in a fit of despair caused by the obduracy of a Dutch widow, whose exuberant beauties he had contrived to fall in love with. Afloat he was always getting into scrapes; and always getting out of them, for his fiddle was indispensable. This respectable artist purloined a brandy-flask from one of his comrades during a foray ashore, got drunk, lagged behind, and was never heard of afterwards by his comrades, who could have better spared a very much better man.

Here, too, they saw the last of the negroes whom they had pressed from *The Good Jesus*. One of the pair managed to escape during a dark night, "contrary to the promises which he had made to remain in the Dutch service." Suspecting that this was a portion of a plot, the general commanded the other negro to be "examined." The man refusing to reply, his judicious examiners stripped him naked, and tied him in the rigging with his face to the sun, and his arms and legs extended in the shape of the letter X, which was the approved form of spread-eagling. A couple of hours in this position rendering him sufficiently tractable, he was taken down. He then confessed that, not only had he been privy to his comrade's design, but that he would certainly have accompanied him had he considered the opportunity a safe one. "Seeing the ingratitude of these Moors, that all the good treatment lavished on them had been thrown away, and that they were always disposed and ready to betray him," the indignant commander ordered this particular specimen of the race to be shot through the head with an arquebus. The sentence was duly executed; but not until the executioner had made the poor negro testify with his dying breath to the truth of the story concerning the gold which had been flung into the sea off the Peruvian coast.

This kind of cruising went on so profitably and agreeably that a council of war, which assembled towards the end of November, decided that they should await the change of season in the bay, where the *Maurice* then lay at anchor, some thirty miles to the west of Manilla. By this time their numbers had fallen to eighty, of whom twenty-five were on board the yacht. But expecting no more formidable opposition than they had hitherto encountered, they considered themselves quite

strong enough for any exertion that was likely to be demanded of them. The *Maurice* could make little way against the brisk north-west wind, so she lowered her topmasts and remained at her moorings, while the *Concord*, a handy little craft, kept prowling about, making numerous prizes, all of which she brought to the anchorage. On the 9th of December she carried one thither, whose cargo, consisting of an ardent spirit distilled from a species of cocoa-nut, was peculiarly acceptable. There was no lack of other good things either, nor of dusky beauties from the neighbouring islands to share. So time sped delightfully with the rovers until Tuesday the 14th of December. Early that morning two vessels appeared in the offing. But the *Concord* had sailed overnight on a cruise, and, therefore, they excited no suspicion at first. As they drew nearer, however, it was clear that they were large and heavily armed ships, and that they were bearing down under a press of canvas for the *Maurice*. The Dutch were surprised; but there was nothing very amazing in the occurrence. Manilla was a great commercial port, and they had been making havoc of its trade for the last six weeks. Their ravages, indeed, had become intolerable, and the Spaniards had determined to destroy them, cost what it might. Seeing the character of the approaching ships, the crew of the *Maurice* hurried their visitors, male and female, into their boats, beat to quarters and prepared for action—running up their topmasts in the first instance, and serving every man on board with a liberal measure of spirits mixed with gunpowder in the second. The foe advanced too rapidly to allow them to weigh anchor, so they slipped their cables and stood out through a fleet of canoes to meet him. Before, however, the *Maurice* could gather much headway, the Spanish admiral was upon them. He received and returned a broadside, and then the vessels closed with a crash. They were lashed together in a twinkling, and a dense mass of Spaniards, many of them clad in mail, dashing on board the *Maurice*, quickly cleared the deck. This achievement would have closed the action in modern times, but not so 300 years ago. The towers carried fore and aft by the vessels of that period, much as they impeded their sailing, were exceedingly useful as defences. Many a sea-fight then took place in which, thanks to these towers, the assailants were eventually repulsed after having been masters of the deck for hours.* Van Noort's battle, therefore, did not really begin until it had reached the point whereat the fights in which Nelson and Cochrane won their fame were wont to cease. The Hollanders retreated—some to the poop, others to the forecastle, and the remainder below. And from these strongholds they kept up a destructive fire on the enemy. But the Spanish vice-admiral was rapidly approaching to sustain his chief, and had he been allowed to range alongside unchecked, it would have gone hard with the *Maurice*. At this juncture the gallant little

* Sir William Monson relates, that he was one of a party thus expelled from a Spanish carrack after having held the deck for no less than twelve hours.

Concord rounded a neighbouring point and dashed straight at the second *Don*. The latter turned aside to meet the puny challenger, with whom he was soon engaged in mortal strife. Being farther from the shore, this pair fell into a current and drifted quickly away, involved in a cloud of smoke. The fray still raged between the principals. While one party of the Spaniards maintained the deck of the *Maurice*, another battered her with cannons, and to both the Dutch replied with right goodwill. Their chiefest contest, however, lay with the boarders, whom they pelted, and who pelted them in turn, with an infinite variety of deadly missiles, and not a few disgusting ones. The assailants being uncovered, fell fast. But the disparity of numbers began to tell at length on the weaker party, some of whom even spoke of surrender. Van Noort was applying the match to a cunningly-prepared firework, which promised to work much destruction among the Spaniards, when the word reached his ears. Grim with powder and bedaubed with blood as he was, the admiral much resembled an Indian in his war-paint. And not less fiercely savage was the course he adopted. "Surrender! who talks of surrender?" questioned he, starting up. Then without waiting a reply, he swung his match into a flame, and rushing to the powder magazine, he swore, with a voice that outroared the din of battle, to blow them all "to deepest hell" the moment they relaxed their exertions. "Amen!" yelled "the consoler of the sick," who was working a gun right lustily. Van Noort was emphatically a man of his word, so his crew resumed the fight with double fury. Seeing the determination of their antagonists, the Spaniards in turn lost heart. Crowding back to the galleon, they cast loose the fastenings, which they had been so eager to twine three hours before. But one of their anchors caught the fore-shrouds of the *Maurice*, and the vessels maintained their deadly proximity a little longer. This, however, was not an impediment that could long restrain the panic-stricken crowd. Some of the shrouds were cut, others gave way, and the antagonists drifted asunder, both in wretched plight; but the Spaniards in by far the worse condition, having been terribly mauled by cannon-shot near the water-line. Hardly, then, had she forged clear of the Dutchman, than she lurched heavily to leeward, lifted her stern high in the air, and dived bow foremost to the bottom, where she lay with her mastheads above water. "Then," says the narrator of the voyage, "did we see the surviving Spaniards, to the number of 200 or more, seeking to prolong their lives by swimming and shouting misericordia." The Dutch, however, had no leisure to attend to them just at once, for their own vessel was dangerously on fire between decks. The conflagration was extinguished at length by dint of great exertion, whereupon the Hollanders fell on their knees to thank the God of Battles for their victory. The "consoler of the sick," stripped to the waist, and terrible as a priest of Odin at the Yule sacrifices, breathed a short fierce prayer that harmonized well with the reeking carnage round him, and then the victors rose to deal with the swimming foe. One half of these had already followed their ship to the bottom;

others had been rescued by native boats; and the rest met with no mercy. Tacking hither and thither through them, the *Maurice* ran many of the swimmers down, while her crew "struck at the heads of the rest, and thus drove them under water,"—an atrocious deed, but unfortunately a common one in sea-fights "beyond the line!" The Dutch had seven killed and twenty-six wounded in this desperate encounter, so that there now remained in the *Maurice* but twenty-two sound men. As for the little *Concord*, they saw her in the distance close under the lee of the other Spaniard with the Dutch flag struck. She was evidently a prize. But the *Maurice* was in no condition to attempt a rescue, so turning her head towards Borneo, she sped away before the wind, and soon ran the pair out of sight. Van Noort afterwards heard that the crew of the yacht had been carried into Manilla and every man of them hanged as pirates. The Fuegians were avenged.

Steered by a Chinese pilot, they skirted the long island of Palawan, repairing their damaged rigging as they went. They made a good deal of water, for their hull had been shattered by numerous gales, but, most of all, by the Spanish bullets. It was necessary that they should speedily reach a port wherein to refit. Christmas found them off Labuan, not so celebrated then as now. As usual, the day was made a festival, but the mirth was not very uproarious: the recent fight and its results hung too heavily on their spirits. Next morning they anchored in the port of Borneo. Here they found a good specimen of the semi-barbarous despotisms that are still far too numerous on the shores of the eastern seas. The authorities were corrupt, treacherous, and cruel, and the people altogether demoralized. The Dutch were not long in discovering that they must not think of careening in Borneo. Every one of the nine days they remained there revealed some cunning plot or other for their destruction. They were compelled, therefore, to put to sea much sooner than they liked—on the 5th of January, 1601, steering for Java. Knowing nothing of these seas, they were quickly bewildered among its countless islands, and beat about for eleven days without being able to extricate themselves. At last, on the 16th, they caught sight of a native bark, and sailed in pursuit. Overtaking it, they compelled its master to pilot them to Java, where they arrived on the 28th. Van Noort now careened, keeping up a brisk trade the while with the Javanese, and thus turning most of his plunder into pepper. Two days after his arrival he was visited by three Portuguese, who announced themselves spice-merchants. The admiral's experience had taught him to distrust these people, but he had no objection to do a little profitable business with them. After prowling about for some hours the visitors departed, promising to reappear shortly with such a supply of pepper as should satisfy the Dutch. They returned on the 1st of February, bringing with them a fourth, who spoke "good Flemish"—but no pepper. Van Noort's suspicions were now thoroughly roused, so he seized his visitors and clapped them in irons. Then, hurrying his preparations, he got his ship afloat and his cargo on board

in three days more. On the 4th he sailed from Java through the Straits of Bali, which he entered in the tail of a cyclone. Next morning he sighted a "great ship," which had evidently suffered severely from the storm. Her masts were reduced to stumps, her upper works were shattered, and she was drifting helplessly with the tide. The Portuguese in the *Maurice* recognized the wreck at once, and declared it to be that of "the great Malacca galleon." "But this is not her course," observed Van Noort; "how, then, came she hither?" "She was armed for an expedition to Amboyna, where the natives are now in revolt," explained the merchant. "Perhaps," replied Van Noort; "but I shrewdly suspect that yonder carrack was intended to deliver the pepper which you, my friends, had prepared for me."

Here the voyage ceases to interest. The *Maurice* sped across the Indian Ocean and doubled the Cape of Good Hope early in April. The last week of that month she spent at St. Helena. Then traversing the torrid zone and the European Seas without accident, she reached Rotterdam on the 14th of August, 1601, after an absence of nearly three years.

Van Noort's voyage is one of many that illustrate the evils, in the shape of rapine and massacre, which sprang from the Papal grants to Spain and Portugal. But these grants were not unproductive of good. Had they not been made, the tropic seas would have remained free to all. And in consequence navigation and the kindred sciences—whose development, be it observed, has rendered the modern world so utterly unlike the ancient—would have stood comparatively still. Ships of the old vicious forms would have continued to creep along the coasts; seamen to content them with the miserable appliances of their fathers; astronomers to be mere fortune-tellers; and mathematicians little more than contrivers of automata and calculators of clockwork. But the Peninsular monopoly of the older and easier routes changed all this. It compelled the other nations into newer and more perilous tracks. These tracks in their turn required better ships and seamanship, and infinitely superior science, which were all produced with astonishing rapidity; and with them great events—Columbus and America being the immediate result of the Bull which gave Portugal the seas and lands south of Cape Nun; and Magellan and the Pacific the offsprings of the line drawn to the west of the Azores by Pope Alexander VI.

Marian May.

MARIAN MAY was our hamlet's pride,
 Worthy a queen to be,
 For of all the maids in the country side
 Was none so fair as she.

Her hair was like silk and her eyes like wine,
 Liquid and dark and deep;
 They sparkled and danced in the broad sunshine,
 Or melted in rosy sleep.

Lovers by scores for her white hand sighed,
 Of high and of low degree,
 And many came riding from far and wide,
 Her sweethearts fain to be.

The squire had plenty of golden store,
 Such as for him was meet;
 And he wished no better, and asked no more,
 Than to lay it all at her feet.

But she put his gifts and his vows aside,
 Laughing, and out spake she;
 "I never was born for a rich man's bride,
 So I cannot mate with thee."

The parson he came, with his face so grave,
 Gentle and sleek and prim,
 And said the best way her soul to save
 Was to take and marry him.

But she only opened her eyes full wide,
 Wondering, and quoth she,
 "Were there never a man in the world beside,
 You'd be far too good for me!"

The colonel he swore a right round oath—

“Little one, be my wife!

I’ve scars and a pension enough for both,
If you’ll share a soldier’s life.”

He vowed that he would not be denied,

Low on his bended knee;

But she tossed her head with a pretty pride,
Said, “I never will wed with thee!”

Robin came back from the sea one day,

Out of the distant west,

And the child with whom he used to play,
A woman he clasped to his breast.

She sobbed and kissed, and she laughed and cried—

“Welcome, my love,” said she;

“For woe or for weal, and whate’er betide,
I will fare the world through with thee!”

H. C. MERIVALE.

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The Moors.

GIVE us the August moors by way of ideal of an earthly Paradise. The moors and the hills, a perpetual twelfth, with the flush of the vigorous excitement of early youth, fresh as the waking breeze that lifts the skirts of the mist-mantle still enveloping the drowsy mountain-tops ; with spirits buoyant as the air that sends the light pulses of your heart bounding along at the double ; with hopes of autumn sport bright as the glittering dewdrops sown broadcast over grass and heather. Most refined ideal of the earthly Paradise, as it can shape itself to the mental eye in exaggerated anticipation of realities, for it sends you to familiar communing with all that is sweet and sublime in nature. Sin and death must enter, of course, for the Paradise is earthly, and in a sense sensual. They must enter as they enter its counterpart of the Far West, the happy hunting-grounds of the Indian savage. The difference is, that there they reign, while here they subordinate themselves on sufferance. While the brave dreams his eternal joy in an interminable round of insatiate slaughter, gallops his spectre-steed, and bends his phantom bow, without wasting the spirit of a sigh on the dull monotony of his shadowy prairies, death merely recurs incidentally in episodes, in the heaven of the veritable Highland sportsman. True, armed with breechloader for fangs or beak, he fulfils his allotted part in the universal scheme of destruction. Around him, eagles, ravens, hawks, grouse, foxes, wild cats, and promiscuous "vermin" are all preying on their kind. But he asserts the superiority of his God-like nature over rapacious carnivore and voracious insectivore that perish, by the thoughts that throb to the inmost fibres of his nobler nature, by an exuberant intensity of grateful enjoyment, that places him in charity with the very gor-cock that finds its way with mocking crow through his bloodless No. 6.

Moors and hills, we said to begin with, because we talk of mountain-sport and not of soulless butchery. There is nothing to remind one of Hurlingham in what we mean—no steady rattle, remorseless as the harsh grind of the mitrailleuse—no lawn strewn with dead and dying doves in their blood-soaked plumage,—nothing to recall the hot corner in a home cover, when inquisitive hares pay the penalty of their confidence as they prick their ears trustfully among your knickerbockers, and hand-fed pheasants meet the usual fate of pets as they come to untimely ends. We do not even speak of the long level stretch of flat, where the heather grows in rich swathes, as if it had been carefully top-dressed in model-farm fashion ; where, except for an occasional moss-pot, you might walk blindfold for miles without a trip or a stumble ; where gout itself may do

a fair day's work, and timid corpulence shoot quietly from the well-stuffed saddle, as from the bath-chair or perambulator for the matter of that. These are the moors that contribute such bloody butcher-bills early in the season to the columns of the local press ; and they have their uses in their way, for they send Leadenhall grouse down to reasonable prices. These are the moors where you can saunter straight ahead without straining your back-sinews or bringing your breathing to a standstill when your shaking frame has breasted a bluff something less than perpendicular. As you potter forward, you find work in abundance for the spare breech-loaders your henchmen carry at your heels, and your dogs scarcely get well into their range for the constant coveys that taint each rood of the heather.

For a fortnight or three weeks the slaughter is superb for those who revel in it, and by that time the compensatory tenderness of nature has put the survivors of the massacre up to a thing or two. Your scared birds seek safety in society, set their sentinels, take their siestas with one eye open, feed with their shattered nerves on the alert, and rise in packs a couple of rifle-shots off at the vision of the human form. Unless you care to charge your panniers with mountain-hares, nothing more than an occasional outlying cock taken napping will repay the most indomitable perseverance, and perseverance is not the forte of the thick-winded gentlemen who shoot for the spit, the poulterer's stall, and a paragraph in the papers.

Very different is it with our favourite moor. It lies well-nigh lost in the wild heart of the mountains, although a beaten high-road does skirt its pathless solitudes. In these days of political miracle and perpetual surprise, even in stagnant holiday-time, the hermit must compromise with civilization. But it is five-and-forty miles from the nearest railway-station, and there is no danger of confounding the scream of the hunting eagle with the distant whistle of the panting engine. From the blue summits of its high land you catch glimpses of the distant Atlantic down loch-bottomed glens, sacred to the red deer ; too distant, though, to distinguish the smoke of the tourist-laden steamer from the light wreaths of the rain-clouds that are always floating in the west on the sunniest of summer days. Not that you don't have quite as much of the tourist as your misanthropy cares to see. You buy your mutton from your neighbour the innkeeper ; but the " machine " that daily drops your beef and other foreign delicacies at your gates, lumbers along the road, heavily laden with excursionists. Luckily, as yet, the guide-books have not damned your selfish solitude to fame. No embarrassed chieftain, who saw his way to filling his sporran at the cost of the banished dynasty, ever set up his standard in the peaceful glens, nor was its easy-principled, light-fingered population ever annihilated wholesale in sweeping and summary vengeance. It may come to be another thing altogether, should the practical romancers, who draw the prospectus of the proposed railway, get to sight or hearing of the waterfall that at present roars out of ear-shot of all but heedless shepherds, or learn that there are sculptured

stones in the lowly graveyard attached to the ruined chapel by the holy well. Meanwhile, let us live in the present, and be thankful. After us the deluge; and it will be all the same when grouse have been proscribed and game-laws abolished; when the English Commune has enclosed the commons in the name of the people, and reclaimed the moors to the profit of the proletariat.

In keeping with the rough shooting, the shooting-box is a rough one. No sacrifices made to the soft, and few, indeed, to the beautiful. With its low, flat roof, it cowers down out of the way of the elements that sweep the gorge in winter—and sometimes in summer, too—as if the wild huntsman was racing his devil-bred pack through the chimneys. Chimney-pots there are none, of course. In the days when occupants held to these vanities, they used to set down the valley in a steady rush, to be picked up by wreckers lower down, as drift-wood is swept round the Bay of Mexico in the Gulf Stream. Yet, though it bows its head, it squares its broad shoulders and sturdy strength, like a man who jams down his hat ere he sets his teeth to the tempest. It wears a waterproof against the wind-driven flood; and, although there are two good feet of stone in the weather-wall, it is cased carefully in tight-fitting pine-shingles. Within, a relatively spacious hall—that serves as cloak-room, gun-room, parcel-delivery office, &c. &c.—leads to the more spacious sitting-room, whose double windows, with their storm-gallery, command the lake. To the left, kitchen and offices; to the right, the fir-panelled packing-cases, where you accommodate your wardrobe on pegs in the wall, and stow yourself of nights in a compromise between the bunk of the forecastle and the box-bed of the shieling. If your toilette is performed in a series of adroit gymnastics between your bath and your table, the want of elbow-room within is compensated by the sense of space and freedom without. The breeze, faintly fragrant with the peat-reek and heather-bloom, that comes breathing in at the open window, was playing the moment before with the heaving or tumbling waters—plucking a second or two before that at the stunted grass and the lichens that thatch, *tant bien que mal*, the rocky crest of the mountain-lake wall.

The place can be repelling enough, when the little garden is packed with snow in a December storm from palisade to palisade; when the wreathes are heaped high against the dimmed windows, tumbling in on the floor by shovelfuls when you succeed in forcing the frozen sashes; when it is a work of doubt and danger travelling through the blinding drift for the twenty yards that divide you from the keeper's cottage; when your vain attempt to visit the yet nearer kennel, lands you in the peat-stack at the opposite angle of the lodge. It can be sufficiently triste even in an unpropitious August, when the rain tumbling out of opened sluices, drops impenetrable curtains between the steaming window-panes and the outer world. And sometimes it feels eerie enough of a night in late September, when you are reading yourself to sleep by a single candle, to the sad sympathy of winds sighing and moaning in the stunted fir-

plantation, like scores of *Æolian* harps gone melancholy mad. But see it of a sunny afternoon on the eleventh, when you have travelled straight by crowded limited mail from the smoky, sulphureous purgatory of St. James's, whence you have been doing society for months past, fevered in the frame, fagged in the stomach, and, as you begin shrewdly to suspect, slightly touched in the liver. You have been breathing in laughing-gas for the last few hours, as you dragged up by heather, and bracken, and hill-locked meadow, through pine-woods and feathering glades of natural birch, as you crossed and recrossed the silver stream that laughed you a welcome as it came leaping down the strath from the lake that filters it beneath your windows. You are half beside yourself with the bright intoxication that is untroubled by any sinister shadow of inevitable reaction; with just sense sufficient of yesterday's weariness and boredom, to make you hail the idea of a peaceful sojourn in this Eden. There stands your unpretending home, blooming in the bright paint of its gay spring hues, smiling cheerily at you as if an infallible barometer were screwed past at set-fair, as if summer sunshine were eternal, and there had been no such thing as winter wear and tear. The peat smoke curling up cosily out of the kitchen chimney, dissipating itself deliberately in dissolving rings in the flickering, stirless air, appeals at once to the poetry and prose of your nature, and with blessed assurance of dinner calms the jaded appetite that is stirring like a famished bear after the dulling influences of the London season.

See the place that evening when the pleasant memories of many a past season came crowding round you,—memories from which time has evaporated the bitter, and only left the sweet,—as you issue forth, cigar in mouth, when a temperate measure of claret has washed down your mountain mutton. Temperate that is, for the high latitude you are landed in, for circumstances alter cases, and the frugal hermit of the Tartar steppes or the Highland hills might be the glutton and drunkard of a club in Pall Mall. After all, the pleasure of the evening, profoundly all-pervading as it is, is more than anything else the anticipation of the coming morning. If only the mountain glass do not belie its promise; if only the weather-sage keeper or the hoary shepherd have not said what they know will please, to rise convicted in the morning as lying oracles. Not likely, or those gorgeous clouds that are fading into gloom on the mountain seaboard of the Atlantic must be liars too; and as for the martens, if there is any truth in omens drawn from the flight of birds, the morrow will be a day to mark with a white stone in the weather calendar.

Of course for the man who means to make a heavy bag on scientific principles and extreme economy of exertion, it is short-sighted policy to be up and about with the "skriegh of day." The sluggish may ask for a little more sleep with a clear conscience, muttering as he turns himself over about the more haste and the worse speed. To say nothing of the scent and the birds, mortal flesh and blood, especially when wretchedly out of condition, can't work from an August dawn to a sunset dinner, and

shoot as steadily at the end as at the beginning. So if you go in for the bag and the bare sport, you may just as well be out during the orthodox hours when other Christians of your hemisphere are pursuing their business or their pleasure. But then there are the associations that hurry you back in the spirit to that twelfth of auld lang syne when you were a boy. The freshness of that early morning air is so exhilarating, that you scarcely sadden yourself with thinking of the torpor of feeling that has grown on you these many years. It is something to quaff the elixir of life, and renew the boyish enthusiasm of your youth, on a single morning in the three hundred and sixty-five. You are hardly less excited than those couples of young setters who are positively moaning and trembling with delirious joy as they crouch and wriggle in their couples. Not the shadow of an appetite for breakfast, although perhaps on second thoughts the dinner of yesterday may have something to do with that. No matter. There is an ambulatory larder in the ample panniers slung to the shaggy pony, and if we should chance to climb, as may well happen, to where even those sure-footed limbs of his dare hardly follow us, his burden can always be transferred to the broad shoulders of the gillies. Meanwhile, if you can't buttress your back with a substantial meal, there is no difficulty about disposing of that brimming tumbler, and you silence any scruples of your slightly morbid liver by dashing the creaming milk with Glenlivet or old Jamaica. There is music in the snap of the locks of your breechloader—such music as you have not listened to for some months or more; and yet since you listened to it last you have lolled in many an opera-stall, and yawned critical approval of sublime symphonies at many a classical concert. But looking after it tenderly, you part with your gun to a brawny member of your Gaelic tail. You know, by long experience, the hills you are condemned to mount before you begin your beat, hills that would try the steel and whipcord of the red deer, to say nothing of those flaccid calves of yours. So you grasp a staff in the meantime, and the sporting procession *s'ébranle*. The old keeper marching modestly half a foot or so in the rear of your right flank, "cracking" cheerily of old times and memorable days, talking sanguinely of present prospects, although another hour must bring his promise to the test. Four summers now since there has been a touch of disease or a tainted feather in the place, and in the seven-and-twenty years he has been here, he never recollects such a breeding-season nor so few barren birds. Behind you and your friend come a couple and a half of gillies, one of them retained permanently on the strength of your sporting establishment, the others amphibious jacks-of-all-trades, recruited for the season. "Alike to them the sea, the shore, the brand, the bridle, or the oar." Members of the Rosshire militia; tillers on an occasion of the barren acres that surround the paternal croft; every season ploughing the heaving sea with the herring fleet; now, as we perceive, taking to the hill-side as to the manner born—and so they have been. Poachers on temptation very likely, although, to do them justice, the canny Donald

and Duncan prefer getting their living and their little luxuries by honest work. Yet more than once have one or the other tumbled over the lordly red deer with half a handful of swan-shot, in the grey light of the dawn or the gloaming, as the monarch of the wild came to seek his tithes in the scanty harvest of the squatter. Donald, Dongald, and Duncan each lead a couple of straining setters in leash, sustaining up hill and down dale without the slightest effort an animated Gaelic conversation in guttural undertone. Yet by this time, so steep is the hill-face, that the panniers containing your larder and cellar are slipping back on the pony's cat-like crupper, and the boy at his head has left that accomplished mountaineer to zig-zag upwards over the slippery heather-roots after his own way and devices.

Tantalizing work, having to plod forward toward the points where you have arranged to begin the beat, that you may give the dogs what wind there is of their quarry. Yet you cannot afford to throw away a chance in that way, for, judging by the signs of the weather, there is all the promise of a sweltering day. "'Deed, sir," says the keeper, "you'll better be settling to take your lunch by the well at Crohallion. We'll all of us be wanting the best of wa-a-te-r-r by that time, I'm thinking." Meantime, the merry crow of each outlying grouse-cock, as he dashes away upon the wing, rings like a challenge in your ears, long after he has carried himself and his note over the hill shoulder; and now and again you pause with irresolute foot uplifted in the air, as the young brood that have lain like stones flash up panic-driven round your boots, to stream through the air in bouquets of rockets.

Luckily you are gifted with a soul for scenery, and, with all your impatience, you fill pleasantly enough the pauses that the labouring ascent makes matter of simple necessity. Although you have to climb even higher yet, what a wealth of broken landscape lies beneath the airy Pisgah you have reached already. The shooting-lodge diminished to the size of one of the boxes you left by the kennel-doors to pack those spoils of the day you mean to barter for dinners in future seasons; the rippling lake, toned by the distance into a glassy mirror; the silver stream meandering through the purple heather; the fleecy patches where the sheep flock the valley and dot the hill-sides; the sunlight falling full on the wrinkled chest of the opposite mountain, with the morning clouds fluttering in tatters from its crest and flanks. Higher still, and you look over intervening ridges into distant glens; down giant vistas into a remote jumble of forest, flood, and fell. You are high enough, in all conscience, now; up in the zone of greystone and barren turf, and, indeed, you have to dip sharp again down the other water-shed, before you draw a long sigh of gratitude and anticipation by your starting-point. *Finis coronat opus.* At last, the end, or rather the beginning of the end, crowns the work. The dogs know it well—old Don and Carlo, at least, who are led forward to the front. As for the young ones, they must yelp down their disappointment as they may, confine themselves to the simple rôle of spectators, and make the most, for the present, of the tantalizing pleasures of hope.

The couples are slipped by the side of a mountain brook, where the brown water breaks round the mighty boulders that have tumbled into it; where the rush of the floods has mined the banks at each rapid turn that follows the sharp bend of the mountains, and where the rank heather droops its purple fringe over a succession of gravel-floored caverns. A rush, a scramble, a shower of spray and pebbles, and from one of these emerges a mighty ram in mortal panic, scaring, as he tops the bank, a half-dozen of the ladies of his family, who have been leisurely picking their morning meal, buried in a bracken-bed over their curling horns. Whir-r-r! Up rises a covey among the bounding feet of the fugitives, the old birds having the advantage of their offspring by a full dozen of seconds. For yourself, you had been bending over the peat-stained stream, filling your leather drinking-cup. You have just time to toss it aside as you snatch at your gun. Fortunately the keeper had been slipping in the cartridges. All the same, in the surprise and agitation, you make a clean miss of the single bird that sweeps round your shoulder from the left—miss him with the first barrel at least, for the messengers from your second do overtake him just in time.

Rather a questionable beginning, but, after all, it was only a bit of bad luck, and the covey was strong on the wing and wonderfully well grown: hard to tell the young birds from the old ones. And while you are yet speaking, there you are again; and this time, with every prospect of a shot in orthodox first-day-of-the-season fashion. Carlo, dropping on that knoll, as if he had been shot, only there is abundance of life in his eye, as he gently turns his head among the heather sprays, to make sure you are awake and mean action. Don's stern feathering in a quiver of nervous excitement, as he backs upon the very spot where the vision of Carlo has struck him motionless, precisely as he was scrambling over that moss-grown stone in an attitude that nothing but his native grace can redeem from awkwardness. You pick your way towards Carlo, rising the knoll cautiously, your gun pitched well forward. But there is no especial need for over-care; the sheep flushed the last lot, it is true, but this balmy morning the birds will rise like brooding-hens. At last the tenseness of the situation becomes too much for the nerves of the old cock, who knows something of dogs and breech-loaders from vivid recollections of luckier seasons. Till now his eye has been half-fascinated by Carlo's, but at last the spell is broken, and he is up and away, leaving his wife to look after the chickens, with the confirmed selfishness of a family man demoralized by bachelor habits. His cheery crow of triumph is premature. You give him law enough, and then drop him with a heavy thud on the heather, in all the delicate consideration for his plumage that the circumstances admit of. Nor does his widow survive a score of seconds to lament her lord, and before the last pair of interesting orphans have collected their faculties sufficiently to leave the scene of the bloody drama, you have charged with a fresh pair of cartridges and taken a couple of pot-shots. Superb the old birds are, with the ruddy pencillings of

their delicate breasts and wings, and those white-feathered knickerbockers which nature has so thoughtfully drawn over their rough boots. And so you go on till the sun beats down with concentrated heat, and the wind drops; until scarcely an air is stirring in the simmering hollows, and your breath comes short, and molten lead seems running down your heavy arms into your gun-stock and barrels, and the rank heather-stems, that reach to mid-thigh, cling to your failing legs like coiling serpents, and the tired ankles in your polished boots go slipping and twisting about on the smooth moss-bedded blocks. There is a certain sinking sense of vacuity in your inner man beside, spite of the biscuits and spirit-laced water you have been indulging in at intervals; and the birds are getting decidedly the better of you at your game of hide-and-seek, as they generally contrive to do towards noon of a hot summer day. So, although what should be an excellent stretch of ground lies between you and the trysting-place for luncheon, you resolve to make a short-cut of it, and bid the panting dogs be coupled up forthwith.

The diamond of the moors bubbles up in a secluded nook that you see nothing of until you stumble right in. Sheltered under the hanging shoulder of the mountain, from the precipice above you surmise nothing of the peaceful sanctuary beneath your feet. The very winds that search each cranny of the Highland corries might be puzzled to find their way to it; and the worst chance of discovery lies in the streamlet that trickles down from the fountain turning traitor, and the streamlet keeps a quiet tongue in its head as it steals down in the groove it has worn beneath the hanging bracken. In the daytime the place is tranquil enough; the slumbering silence broken only by the low twitter of the whinchat, or the note of the water-ousel. In the night it might be otherwise were mortal ever there to listen, and, doubtless, you would hear the sad cry of the martin-cat and wild-cat from the loose-heaped, bracken-thatched boulders where they kennel with the mountain foxes. At present, when you make your way in, the only occupants are a hoary-headed raven, hopping about most perfectly at home, as if he were the tutelary genius of the cool shades, and a couple of wild-eyed ewes with crumpled horns. The raven rises heavily with vindictive croak, and flaps his deliberate flight resentfully upwards with hanging head and drooping legs, as if he gloried in his enchanted privileges, and mocked at anything short of silver shot. The sheep make a frantic dash at the outlet, meet your formidable party face to face, stand fiercely at bay for a second or two in the very extremity of agitation and terror, and then escalate the precipitous sides in avalanches of gravel, and a style that would do credit to chamois or *mouflons*. Once within, the very gillies draw grateful breaths of happiness, not alone at the change from sun to shade, but in mute acknowledgment of beauties that find their way to the feelings, through water-proofed suits of homespun, and skins tanned by exposure to every manner of weather. That silent tribute paid to sentiment, the next thought is of the practical. "Just pass the baskets this way, Donald." Donald

is already busy disengaging them from the pony, who has scrambled somehow up the treacherous staircase, scenting his way with those keen nostrils of his past the ugly dangers of the sunken stream.

The baskets are unpacked, and the contents spread on the green turf table-cloth, that serves you for couch as well. You make your breakfast-lunch reclining classically, after the manner of the ancients, round materials for a meal that are equally solid and simple. Slices of cold beef and bread—nothing of the abominable sandwich, with its dyspeptic memories of hustling crowds at railway-counters, laden with fly-blown pastry, flowing with fiery Hamburg wines. After to-day you may add a cold grouse or two: on the twelfth you must dispense with that luxury. You feel like the Ancient Mariner travestied in mountaineer,—“Game, game around you everywhere, and not a scrap to eat.” Never mind, you manage to rough it somehow, with a tolerable local imitation of a Yorkshire pie, with cheese and biscuits, and such manly fare. Your meal is somewhere half-way between a breakfast given by Lucullus, and one of those Spartan spreads whose frugal *menus* were settled by the statutes of Lyncurgus. With the appetite you find, after getting your breath again, and sending a lightly-laced mouthful of chilling water hissing over your glowing palate, the repast approaches nearer the former extreme than the latter. Nor has the department of the cellar been unattended to. Dugald, officiating as chief-butler, has already, with a certain careful contempt, deposited in the cooling wave the flasks that speak of shadeless vineyards on the glowing gravel slopes of the Gironde. With infinite love and tenderness he has immersed by their side the more sturdy green glass bottle that contains the sacred usquebaugh—the Highlandman’s genuine water of life. There are metal flasks of it besides; but that is a point on which prudence counsels stinting your liberality. The honest members of your tail walk steady enough as a rule, and you may trust them absolutely in most things; but you can scarcely complain of their tripping if you set the snare for them with your own hands. They are mortals, after all, and if you tempt them beyond mortal strength, small blame to them if they succumb.

You have eaten and drunk, and chassed your claret. Pipes are ablaze, and the pungent clouds that wreath themselves so picturesquely round the group, are playing the very mischief with the appetites of the midges, who, up to a minute before, had it all their own way. The wiry Donald, who is risen like a giant refreshed—although, indeed, the latent energy of his frame scarcely needed refreshment—is already busy over the game-panniers.

“That’s right, Donald: now for the bag.”

Fifteen and a half brace, a mallard to boot, a couple of snipe, and a mountain hare or two. We could have knocked over dozens of the last, had it been worth while overburdening the unlucky pony. A very fair morning’s work up to eleven for a man who shoots and doesn’t slaughter; but how some of the millionaire aristocrats in the Perthshire and Aberdeenshire flats would turn up their noses. Superb plumage the birds are in,

even the young ones springy as india-rubber and plump as quails in season. After all, for man, beast, or bird, there is nothing like the mountain air, always bracing, even when it does not bite.

That tribute paid the susceptibilities of the keeper, who holds himself personally responsible for the plumage and condition of his birds, you think of imitating the undepraved instincts of the dogs, and recruiting nature with a siesta. Already Ponto and Carlo are deep in the dreamless sleep so sweetly earned by honest labour ; while the young ones, who have been more excited than fagged, lie tumbled promiscuous in a hairy heap, ranging through worlds where there are no dog-calls nor dog-whips ; standing birds in dreamland, and very possibly running in and mouthing them. You sink back, with eyes contemplating through the warm flicker of the sunny air the light fleecy clouds becalmed here and there against the deep blue of the heavens. Nothing between you and them to remind you your Eden is earthly after all, but a troop of these bothersome midges hovering at a wary distance, and a speck something larger than they, and seemingly a good deal farther off. It may be your acquaintance the raven you turned out so unceremoniously ; it may be the golden eagle, the secular bird of the mountain, who has had his eyrie on the cliffs above from time immemorial. In any case it does not greatly signify, and you have no idea of taking the trouble of thinking the matter out. Already your eyelids grow too heavy for the strings that should hold them in suspense, and midges, eagle, everything, melt back into a field of vision that removes itself dreamily beyond the ken of the bodily eye. Another minute or two and you are gone to your dogs ; have wandered after them at least, away from the world that was so all-engrossing to all of you, when you made your start that morning from the kennels.

Nothing like a siesta in the circumstances. You waken from it another man, all languor gone from mind and body, or little left of it but a slight stiffness in the lower extremities ; and half-an-hour of leisurely exercise will soon untie the knots your sinews have been gathering themselves in. Besides, there is a bit of a breeze sprung up, and the scent is fresher, and the sport likely to be excellent ; altogether, the afternoon promises at least as well as the morning. Nor is the promise belied, and you are tempted to linger. The sun is sloping to the west as you reach the black moss that lies in the water-shed between the valley you have been shooting along and the valley you are returning to. You strike the sinuous path that threads its treacherous flow,—a path very much resembling that by which Bunyan's pilgrim picked his way through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. You have had somewhat ugly walking for some time back : among moss-holes with treacherous coverings of green, when a single false step may make it a case of over the ankle, over the ears. But here it is altogether a different thing. The slimy soil of the quaking bog may settle under your heavy boots at any moment, and you may find your resting-place fifty feet beneath the surface, lying peacefully until future generations of improvers disinter you, looking much as you look

to-day, a little browner perhaps, thanks to the antiseptic properties of the peat. So rarely is the spot visited—for the shepherd need seldom come where no sheep would dream of straying after pasture—that the instincts of the wary red deer tell him he may sleep secure when the odds are so long against surprise. As a case in point, we actually catch a pair of them napping. Two sleek hinds spring out of a moss-bog within half gun-shot, but, as it would be idle cruelty mangling them with No. 6, they are quit for the fright. Their light bounds lift them safely along where no human foot dare follow, their ruddy hides smeared to the ears with the jet-black mud they have been lying in. A sporting who-ooop from the gillie nearest, and they change their canter for a startled gallop, and, taking each obstacle as it comes in their frantic stride, are away at their fleetest for the wild sanctuary of their forest.

There are gorgeous evening lights on the rocky peaks and the heathery summits, although the valley depths are disappearing in the evening gloom, as we turn the shoulder above the shooting-box, and in the calm satisfaction of a well-spent day drawing to a pleasant close, work our way in zig-zags down upon the orifices of the chimneys. Shoot conscientiously still; although from time to time, as Shot or Sancho conspicuously come to a stand on the heights above, and compel us to retrace our steps, there is something like a plaintive murmur in the depths of our hearts in response to the appeal of aching back-sinews. But what is pleasure without the alternation of hardship, if not of pain? the dreary monotony of a magnificent summer without a cloud or shower? and the countless steps you have made since you left that door at early dawn, to return to it some fifteen hours later, have all been leading on to the moment when, after bath and deliberate toilette, you draw your chairs to a table where the sparkling wax-lights are reflecting themselves in plate and crystal and amber wine. How the talk flows as the evening goes on. If you don't hurry your memory it leisurely brings you back each incident of the day in most minute detail—a panorama of sharp-cut impressions—and photographs everything on your mental retina, down to the very stones and heather-tussock where you dropped your grouse; the shallow reach of water that winged bird splashed through to seek a vain concealment among the overhanging heather-roots; the black sedge-fringed pool by the grey boulder where you flushed the unsuspecting mallard;—and then the well-won repose, as you nestle snugly in the blankets;—for after the sunny day the air that comes in through the casements feels something more than cool as it fans cheeks still flushed with exertion—and that glorious header in the morning, when you leap into the lake and life, to emerge dripping as a water-god in the vigour of his immortal strength.

Not that the life of the moors has nothing but its sunny side: very far from it indeed. The heather would never grow so rank, nor the grass in the corries so green, if floods did not come like familiar things to the barren soil that teems in the luxuriance of its wild vegetation. How it does pour when the weather makes up its mind to it: Holland would be

swamped in the ocean waves in spite of all its dams, if it had but a single season of the weather of the western highlands. Luckily Providence arranges a perfect system of natural drainage, and as there is not a yard of absolutely level land in a circumference of fifty miles, the rain is off on its way to the sea as fast as it touches the land. One lovely evening as you turn homewards from your sport, you see grim clouds with all manner of sinister browns and sepias dashed into their colouring banking up over the Atlantic. If that is not sufficient for you, if you disbelieve the ominous shakes of the keeper's head, reluctant experience must yield conviction to the winged heralds of the coming storm. The huge white sea-gulls come floating up the glens with plaintive cries. The swallows are skimming through the waving grass in your paddock; in early season you get in your rough hay-crop, somewhere towards the beginning of October; and as for the mercury in the weather-glass, it has vanished clean out of sight in the bulb. Next morning you can scarcely hear the heavy drip from the storm-gallery, for the deadening plash without. Not a vision of the lake, although you can hear it grinding on its gravel bank within a few feet of your windows; the only life you distinguish among the waste of waters is the ponies, that in vain search for shelter and companionship, and with streaming hides are leaning miserably against the gables. So it goes on day after day, until you have a profound sympathy with the uneasy impatience of Noah, when he opened the window and started the raven on its mission. You have *The Times*, it is true, the *Pall Mall* and the *Saturday*, and some of the magazines; a choice selection of green and yellow novels you have read before; such light popular literature in short as is suitable to men determined beforehand on being idle. It is wearisome, there is no doubt; and if desperation drive you beyond the watery walls of your prison, you are washed back again in spite of yourself. But with firm faith, even then, in the doctrine of compensations, you feel all your ennui will be repaid you, in the burst of joy with which your bounding heart greets the first outbreak of the returning sun. He has to make a hard fight of it, it is true; and before the weather settles back to serenity, you have one or two off days, when you know it to be idle to risk your gun-locks in the chase through plashing water and pools, over sloppy, slippery mountain sides after birds as wild as hawks. But *toujours* grouse might become as tiresome as *toujours* partridge, and not the least pleasant of your recollections link themselves to these off days when venturing abroad in water-proofing you shake off the sense of confinement as you inhale the freshened air. You turn out to drag the lake for trout and pike. What lights on loch and fresh-washed mountain, as the sun falls on the glistening patches of green; on the red seams where a yard or two of landslip has just descended into the water, on the hundreds of rain-rills throwing themselves from cliff to cliff in tiny cascades, till taking the final plunge, they waste themselves in "dustfalls" on the driving breeze. The men, glad to find themselves again on the element that comes so natural to them, stretch their sinews

and brawny arms to the oar after their long confinement to the kennels. The coble spins over the rocking waves almost too rapidly for the chances of sport, as the brown net runs swiftly out from the stern and the black corks rise bobbing merrily on the track. And when they have put the girdle round the bay, how like children they strip off their boots and stockings to dash in bare-legged and drag the net to the land. What excitement over the silvery scales gleaming in the shallow water among the tarry meshes. The heavier trout are tossed up walloping on the bank, while the long-jawed pike grunt out their savage souls, previous to being stuffed with odoriferous herbs, and embalmed in claret sauce. Nor is it bad fun when the birds are a little wild after broken weather—they scorn to pack for protection in these wilder hills—sending the otter afloat on a mountain tarn, and watching the stirring of the water in its wake, as the little fishes fling themselves by dozens on to the dragging flies. Ptarmigan-shooting repays you, if you care to scale the very highest of your mountain peaks, feast your lungs on the very purest of the mountain air, and your eyes on the very finest of mountain prospects. And in its own way, a mountain fox-hunt is nearly as good a thing as a fast burst with the Quorn, although the find, the run, and the kill take place in a few acres of country like the débris of a score of pyramids of the largest size, just blown sky-high by a portentous explosion of subterranean gases. Were the weather more to be reckoned on, autumn in the moors would be too perfect happiness for mortal man, and could you only arrange the weather for your own convenience, it would not be in human nature to return contented to your lot in lowland life. As it is, you may be sure it is your own fault if you were not happy as mortal can reasonably hope to be, and you must be unreasonable indeed, if you ask anything more than that.

Lord Kilgobbin.

CHAPTER XLIII.

SOME NIGHT-THOUGHTS.



WHEN Gorman reached his room, into which a rich flood of moonlight was streaming, he extinguished his candle, and, seating himself at the open window, lighted his cigar, seriously believing he was going to reflect on his present condition, and forecast something of the future. Though he had spoken so cavalierly of outstaying his time, and accepting arrest afterwards, the jest was by no means so palatable now that he was alone, and could own to himself that the leave he possessed was the unlimited liberty to be houseless and a vagabond, to have none to claim, no roof to shelter him.

His aunt's law-agent, the same Mr. McKeown who acted for Lord Kilgobbin, had once told Gorman that all the King's County property of the O'Sheas was entailed upon him, and that his aunt had no power to alienate it. It is true the old lady disputed this position, and so strongly resented even allusion to it, that, for the sake of inheriting that twelve thousand pounds she possessed in Dutch Stock, McKeown warned Gorman to avoid anything that might imply his being aware of this fact.

Whether a general distrust of all legal people and their assertions was the reason, or whether mere abstention from the topic had impaired the force of its truth, or whether—more likely than either—he would not suffer himself to question the intentions of one to whom he owed so much, certain is it young O'Shea almost felt as much averse to the belief as the old lady herself, and resented the thought of its being true, as of something that would detract from the spirit of the affection she had always borne him, and that he repaid by a love as faithful.

"No, no. Confound it!" he would say to himself. "Aunt Betty



NINA CAME FORWARD AT THAT MOMENT.

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loves me, and money has no share in the affection I bear her. If she knew I must be her heir, she'd say so frankly and freely. She'd scorn the notion of doling out to me as benevolence what one day would be my own by right. She is proud and intolerant enough, but she is seldom unjust—never so willingly and consciously. If, then, she has not said O'Shea's Barn must be mine some time, it is because she knows well it cannot be true. Besides, this very last step of hers, this haughty dismissal of me from her house, implies the possession of a power which she would not dare to exercise if she were but a life-tenant of the property. Last of all, had she speculated ever so remotely on my being the proprietor of Irish landed property, it was most unlikely she would so strenuously have encouraged me to pursue my career as an Austrian soldier, and turn all my thoughts to my prospects under the Empire."

In fact, she never lost the opportunity of reminding him how unfit he was to live in Ireland or amongst Irishmen.

Such reflections as I have briefly hinted at here took him some time to arrive at, for his thoughts did not come freely, or rapidly make place for others. The sum of them, however, was that he was thrown upon the world, and just at the very threshold of life, and when it held out its more alluring prospects.

There is something peculiarly galling to the man who is wincing under the pang of poverty to find that the world regards him as rich and well off, and totally beyond the accidents of fortune. It is not simply that he feels how his every action will be misinterpreted and mistaken, and a spirit of thrift, if not actual shabbiness, ascribed to all that he does, but he also regards himself as a sort of imposition or sham, who has gained access to a place he has no right to occupy, and to associate on terms of equality with men of tastes and habits and ambitions totally above his own. It was in this spirit he remembered Nina's chance expression, "I don't suppose *you* want money!" There could be no other meaning in the phrase than some foregone conclusion about his being a man of fortune. Of course, she acquired this notion from those around her. As a stranger to Ireland, all she knew, or thought she knew, had been conveyed by others. "I don't suppose *you* want money," was another way of saying, "You are your aunt's heir. You are the future owner of the O'Shea estates. No vast property, it is true; but quite enough to maintain the position of a gentleman."

"Who knows how much of this Lord Kilgobbin or his son Dick believed?" thought he. "But certainly my old playfellow Kate has no faith in the matter, or, if she have, it has little weight with her in her estimate of me."

"It was in this very room I was lodged something like five years ago. It was at this very window I used to sit at night, weaving heaven knows what dreams of a future. I was very much in love in those days, and a very honest and loyal love it was. I wanted to be very great, and very gallant, and distinguished, and, above all, very rich; but only for *her*.

only that *she* might be surrounded with every taste and luxury that became her, and that she should share them with me. I knew well she was better than me—better in every way: not only purer, and simpler, and more gentle, but more patient, more enduring, more tenacious of what was true, and more decidedly the enemy of what was merely expedient. Then, was she not proud? not with the pride of birth or station, or of an old name and a time-honoured house, but proud that whatever she did or said amongst the tenantry or the neighbours, none ever ventured to question or even qualify the intention that suggested it? The utter impossibility of ascribing a double motive to her, or of imagining any object in what she counselled but the avowed one, gave her a pride that accompanied her through every hour of life.

“Last of all, she believed in *me*—believed I was going to be one day something very famous and distinguished: a gallant soldier, whose very presence gave courage to the men who followed him, and with a name repeated in honour over Europe. The day was too short for these fancies, for they grew actually as we fed them, and the wildest flight of imagination led us on to the end of the time when there would be but one hope, one ambition, and one heart between us.

“I am convinced that had any one at that time hinted to her that I was to inherit the O’Shea estates, he would have dealt a most dangerous blow to her affection for me. The romance of that unknown future had a great share in our compact. And then we were so serious about it all—the very gravity it impressed being an ecstasy to our young hearts in the thought of self-importance and responsibility. Nor were we without our little tiffs—those lovers’ quarrels that reveal what a terrible civil war can rage within the heart that rebels against itself. I know the very spot where we quarrelled; I could point to the miles of way we walked side by side without a word; and oh! was it not on that very bed I have passed the night, sobbing till I thought my heart would break, all because I had not fallen at her feet and begged her forgiveness ere we parted? Not that she was without her self-accusings, too; for I remember one way in which she expressed sorrow for having done me wrong was to send me a shower of rose-leaves from her little terraced garden; and as they fell in shoals across my window, what a balm and bliss they shed over my heart! Would I not give every hope I have to bring it all back again? to live it over once more—to lie at her feet in the grass, affecting to read to her, but really watching her long black lashes as they rested on her cheek, or that quivering lip as it trembled with emotion. How I used to detest that work which employed the blue-veined hand I loved to hold within my own, kissing it at every pause in the reading, or whenever I could pretext a reason to question her! And now, here I am in the self-same place, amidst the same scenes and objects. Nothing changed but *herself*! She, however, will remember nothing of the past, or if she does, it is with repugnance and regret; her manner to me is a sort of cold defiance, not to dare to revive our old intimacy, nor to fancy that I can take up our acquaintanceship from the past. I almost

fancied she looked resentfully at the Greek girl for the freedom to which she admitted me—not but there was in the other's coquetry the very stamp of that levity other women are so ready to take offence at; in fact, it constitutes amongst women exactly the same sort of outrage, the same breach of honour and loyalty, as cheating at play does amongst men, and the offenders are as much socially outlawed in one case as in the other. I wonder, am I what is called falling in love with the Greek—that is, I wonder, have the charms of her astonishing beauty and the grace of her manner, and the thousand seductions of her voice, her gestures, and her walk, above all, so captivated me that I do not want to go back on the past, and may hope soon to repay Miss Kate Kearney by an indifference the equal of her own? I don't think so. Indeed I feel that even when Nina was interesting me most, I was stealing secret glances towards Kate, and cursing that fellow Walpole for the way he was engaging her attention. Little the Greek suspected, when she asked if 'I could not fix a quarrel on him,' with what a motive it was that my heart jumped at the suggestion! He is so studiously ceremonious and distant with me; he seems to think I am not one of those to be admitted to closer intimacy. I know that English theory of 'the unsafe man,' by which people of unquestionable courage avoid contact with all schooled to other ways and habits than their own. I hate it. 'I am unsafe,' to his thinking. Well, if having no reason to care for safety be sufficient, he is not far wrong. Dick Kearney, too, is not very cordial. He scarcely seconded his father's invitation to me, and what he did say was merely what courtesy obliged. So that, in reality, though the old lord was hearty and good-natured, I believe I am here now because Mdlle. Nina commanded me, rather than from any other reason. If this be true, it is, to say the least, a sorry compliment to my sense of delicacy. Her words were, 'You shall stay,' and it is upon this I am staying."

As though the air of the room grew more hard to breathe with this thought before him, he arose and leaned half-way out of the window.

As he did so, his ear caught the sound of voices. It was Kate and Nina who were talking on the terrace above his head.

"I declare, Nina," said Kate, "you have stripped every leaf off my poor ivy-geranium; there's nothing left of it but bare branches."

"There goes the last handful," said the other, as she threw them over the parapet, some falling on Gorman as he leaned out. "It was a bad habit I learned from yourself, child. I remember when I came here, you used to do this each night, like a religious rite."

"I suppose they were the dried or withered leaves that I threw away," said Kate, with a half irritation in her voice.

"No, they were not. They were oftentimes from your prettiest roses, and as I watched you, I saw it was in no distraction or inadvertence you were doing this, for you were generally silent and thoughtful some time before, and there was even an air of sadness about you, as though a painful thought was bringing its gloomy memories."

"What an object of interest I have been to you without suspecting it," said Kate coldly.

"It is true," said the other, in the same tone; "they who make few confidences suggest much ingenuity. If you had a meaning in this act and told me what it was, it is more than likely I had forgotten all about it ere now. You preferred secrecy, and you made me curious."

"There was nothing to reward curiosity," said she, in the same measured tone; then, after a moment, she added, "I'm sure I never sought to ascribe some hidden motive to *you*. When *you* left my plants leafless I was quite content to believe that you were mischievous without knowing it."

"I read you differently," said Nina. "When *you* do mischief you mean mischief. Now I became so—so—what shall I call it, *intriguée*, about this little 'fetish' of yours, that I remember well the night you first left off and never resumed it."

"And when was that?" asked Kate, carelessly.

"On a certain Friday, the night Miss O'Shea dined here last; was it not a Friday?"

"Fridays, we fancy, are unlucky days," said Kate, in a voice of easy indifference.

"I wonder which are the lucky ones?" said Nina, sighing. "They are certainly not put down in the Irish almanack. By the way, is not this a Friday?"

"Mr. O'Shea will not call it amongst his unlucky days," said Kate, laughingly.

"I almost think I like your Austrian," said the other.

"Only don't call him *my* Austrian."

"Well, he was yours till you threw him off. No, don't be angry: I am only talking in that careless slang we all use when we mean nothing, just as people employ counters instead of money at cards; but I like him; he has that easy flippancy in talk that asks for no effort to follow, and he says his little nothings nicely, and he is not too eager as to great ones, or too energetic, which you all are here. I like him."

"I fancied you liked the eager and enthusiastic people, and that you felt a warm interest in Donogan's fate."

"Yes, I do hope they'll not catch him. It would be too horrid to think of any one we had known being hanged! And then, poor fellow, he was very much in love."

"Poor fellow!" sighed out Kate.

"Not but it was the only gleam of sunlight in his existence, he could go away and fancy that, with heaven knows what chances of fortune, he might have won me."

"Poor fellow!" cried Kate, more sorrowfully than before.

"No, far from it, but very 'happy fellow' if he could feed his heart with such a delusion."

"And you think it fair to let him have this delusion?"

"Of course I do. I'd no more rob him of it than I'd snatch a life-buoy from a drowning man. Do you fancy, child, that the swimmer will always go about with the corks that have saved his life?"

"These mock analogies are sorry arguments," said Kate.

"Tell me, does not your Austrian sing? I see he understands music, but I hope he can sing."

"I can tell you next to nothing of my Austrian—if he must be called so. It is five years since we met, and all I know is how little like he seems to what he once was."

"I'm sure he is vastly improved; a hundred times better mannered; with more ease, more quickness, and more readiness in conversation. I like him."

"I trust he'll find out his great good fortune—that is, if it be not a delusion."

For a few seconds there was a silence—a silence so complete that Gorman could hear the rustle of a dress as Nina moved from her place, and seated herself on the battlement of the terrace. He then could catch the low murmuring sounds of her voice, as she hummed an air to herself, and at length traced it to be the song she had sung that same evening in the drawing-room. The notes came gradually more and more distinct, the tones swelled out into greater fulness, and at last, with one long-sustained cadence of thrilling passion, she cried, "Non mi amava—non mi amava!" with an expression of heart-breaking sorrow, the last syllables seeming to linger on the lips as if a hope was deserting them for ever. "Oh, non mi amava!" cried she, and her voice trembled as though the avowal of her despair was the last effort of her strength. Slowly and faintly the sounds died away, while Gorman, leaning out to the utmost to catch the dying notes, strained his hearing to drink them in. All was still, and then suddenly, with a wild roulade that sounded at first like the passage of a musical scale, she burst out into a fit of laughter, crying "Non mi amava," through the sounds, in a half-frantic mockery. "No, no, non mi amava," laughed she out, as she walked back in to the room. The window was now closed with a heavy bang, and all was silent in the house.

"And these are the affections we break our hearts for!" cried Gorman, as he threw himself on his bed, and covered his face with both his hands.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE HEAD CONSTABLE.

THE Chief Constable, or, to use the irreverent designation of the neighbourhood, the Head Peeler, who had carried away Walpole's luggage and papers, no sooner discovered the grave mistake he had committed, than he hastened to restore them, and was waiting personally at the Castle to apologize for the blunder, long before any of the family had come down—

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stairs. His indiscretion might cost him his place, and Captain Curtis, who had to maintain a wife and family, three saddle-horses, and a green uniform with more gold on it than a Field Marshal's, felt duly anxious and uneasy for what he had done.

"Who is that gone down the road?" asked he, as he stood at the window, while a woman was setting the room in order.

"Sure it's Miss Kate taking the dogs out. Isn't she always the first up of a morning?" Though the captain had little personal acquaintance with Miss Kearney, he knew her well by reputation, and knew therefore that he might safely approach her to ask a favour. He overtook her at once, and in a few words made known the difficulty in which he found himself.

"Is it not after all a mere passing mistake, which once apologized for is forgotten altogether?" asked she. "Mr. Walpole is surely not a person to bear any malice for such an incident?"

"I don't know that, Miss Kearney," said he, doubtingly. "His papers have been thoroughly ransacked, and old Mr. Flood, the Tory magistrate, has taken copies of several letters and documents, all of course under the impression that they formed part of a treasonable correspondence."

"Was it not very evident that the papers could not have belonged to a Fenian leader? Was not any mistake in the matter easily avoided?"

"Not at once, because there was first of all a sort of account of the insurrectionary movement here, with a number of queries, such as, 'Who is M——?' 'Are F. Y—— and M'Causland the same person?' 'What connection exists between the Meath outrages and the late events in Tipperary?' 'How is B—— to explain his conduct sufficiently to be retained in the Commission of the Peace?' In a word, Miss Kearney, all the troublesome details by which a Ministry have to keep their own supporters in decent order, are here hinted at, if not more, and it lies with a batch of red-hot Tories to make a terrible scandal out of this affair."

"It is graver than I suspected," said she, thoughtfully.

"And I may lose my place," muttered Curtis, "unless, indeed, you would condescend to say a word for me to Mr. Walpole."

"Willingly, if it were of any use, but I think my cousin Mdlle. Kostalergi would be likelier of success, and here she comes."

Nina came forward at that moment, with that indolent grace of movement, with which she swept the greensward of the lawn as though it were the carpet of a saloon. With a brief introduction of Mr. Curtis, her cousin Kate in a few words conveyed the embarrassment of his present position, and his hope that a kindly intercession might avert his danger.

"What droll people you must be not to find out that the letters of a Viceroy's secretary could not be the correspondence of a rebel leader," said Nina, superciliously.

"I have already told Miss Kearney how that fell out," said he; "and I assure you there was enough in those papers to mystify better and clearer heads."

"But you read the addresses, and saw how the letters began 'My dear Mr. Walpole,' or 'Dear Walpole'?"

"And thought they had been purloined. Have I not found 'Dear Clarendon' often enough in the same packet with cross-bones and a coffin?"

"What a country!" said Nina, with a sigh.

"Very like Greece, I suppose," said Kate, tartly; then suddenly, "Will you undertake to make this gentleman's peace with Mr. Walpole, and show how the whole was a piece of ill-directed zeal?"

"Indiscreet zeal."

"Well, indiscreet, if you like it better."

"And you fancied, then, that all the fine linen and purple you carried away were the properties of a head-centre?"

"We thought so."

"And the silver objects of the dressing-table, and the ivory inlaid with gold, and the trifles studded with turquoise?"

"They might have been Donogan's. Do you know, Mademoiselle, that this same Donogan was a man of fortune, and in all the society of the first men at Oxford when—a mere boy at the time—he became a rebel?"

"How nice of him. What a fine fellow!"

"I'd say what a fool," continued Curtis. "He had no need to risk his neck to achieve a station, the thing was done for him. He had a good house and a good estate in Kilkenny; I have caught salmon in the river that washes the foot of his lawn."

"And what has become of it; does he still own it?"

"Not an acre—not a rood of it; sold every square yard of it to throw the money into the Fenian treasury. Rifled artillery, Colt's revolvers, Remingtons, and Parrot guns have walked off with the broad acres."

"Fine fellow—a fine fellow!" cried Nina, enthusiastically.

"That fine fellow has done a deal of mischief," said Kate, thoughtfully.

"He has escaped, has he not?" asked Nina.

"We hope not—that is, we know that he is about to sail for St. John's by a clipper now in Belfast, and we shall have a fast steam-corvette ready to catch her in the Channel. He'll be under Yankee colours, it is true, and claim an American citizenship; but we must run risks sometimes, and this is one of those times."

"But you know where he is now? Why not apprehend him on shore?"

"The very thing we do not know, Mademoiselle. I'd rather be sure of it than have five thousand pounds in my hand. Some say he is here, in the neighbourhood; some that he is gone south; others declare that he has reached Liverpool. All we really do know is about the ship that he means to sail in, and on which the second mate has informed us."

"And all your boasted activity is at fault," said she, insolently, "when you have to own you cannot track him."

"Nor is it so easy, Mademoiselle, where a whole population befriend and feel for him."

"And if they do, with what face can you persecute what has the entire sympathy of a nation?"

"Don't provoke answers which are sure not to satisfy you, and which you could but half comprehend; but tell Mr. Curtis you will use your influence to make Mr. Walpole forget this mishap."

"But I do want to go to the bottom of this question. I will insist on learning why people rebel here."

"In that case, I'll go home to breakfast, and I'll be quite satisfied if I see you at luncheon," said Kate.

"Do, pray, Mr. Curtis, tell me all about it. Why do some people shoot the others who are just as much Irish as themselves? Why do hungry people kill the cattle and never eat them? And why don't the English go away and leave a country where nobody likes them? If there be a reason for these things, let me hear it."

"By-by," said Kate, waving her hand, as she turned away.

"You are so ungenerous," cried Nina, hurrying after her; "I am a stranger, and would naturally like to learn all that I could of the country and the people; here is a gentleman full of the very knowledge I am seeking. He knows all about these terrible Fenians. What will they do with Donogan if they take him?"

"Transport him for life; they'll not hang him, I think."

"That's worse than hanging. I mean—that is—Miss Kearney would rather they'd hang him."

"I have not said so," replied Kate; "and I don't suspect I think so, either."

"Well," said Nina, after a pause, "let us go back to breakfast. You'll see Mr. Walpole; he's sure to be down by that time, and I'll tell him what you wish is, that he must not think any more of the incident; that it was a piece of official stupidity, done, of course, out of the best motives; and that if he should cut a ridiculous figure at the end, he has only himself to blame for the worse than ambiguity of his private papers."

"I do not know that I'd exactly say that," said Kate, who felt some difficulty in not laughing at the horror-struck expression of Mr. Curtis's face.

"Well then, I'll say—this was what I wished to tell you, but my cousin Kate interposed and suggested that a little adroit flattery of you, and some small coquetries that might make you believe you were charming, would be the readiest mode to make you forget anything disagreeable, and she would charge herself with the task."

"Do so," said Kate, calmly; "and let us now go back to breakfast."

CHAPTER XLV.

SOME IRISHRIES.

THAT which the English irreverently call "chaff" enters largely as an element into Irish life; and when Walpole stigmatized the habit to Joe Atlee as essentially that of the smaller Island, he was not far wrong. I will not say that it is a high order of wit—very elegant, or very refined; but it is a strong incentive to good-humour—a vent to good spirits; and being a weapon which every Irishman can wield in some fashion or other, establishes that sort of joust which prevailed in the *mêlée* tournaments, and where each tilted with whom he pleased.

Any one who has witnessed the progress of an Irish trial, even when the crime was of the very gravest, cannot fail to have been struck by the continual clash of smart remark and smarter rejoinder between the bench and the bar; showing how men feel the necessity of ready-wittedness, and a promptitude to repel attack, in which even the prisoner in the dock takes his share, and cuts his joke at the most critical moment of his existence.

The Irish theatre always exhibits traits of this national taste; but a dinner-party, with its due infusion of barristers, is the best possible exemplification of this give and take, which, even if it had no higher merit, is a powerful ally of good humour, and the sworn foe to everything like over-irritability or morbid self-esteem. Indeed I could not wish a very conceited man, of a somewhat grave temperament and distant demeanour, a much heavier punishment than a course of Irish dinner-parties; for even though he should come out scatheless himself, the outrages to his sense of propriety, and the insults to his ideas of taste, would be a severe suffering.

That breakfast-table at Kilgobbin had some heavy hearts around the board. There was not, with the exception of Walpole, one there who had not, in the doubts that beset his future, grave cause for anxiety; and yet to look at, still more to listen to them, you would have said that Walpole alone had any load of care upon his heart, and that the others were a light-hearted, happy-set of people, with whom the world went always well. No cloud!—not even a shadow to darken the road before them. Of this levity—for I suppose I must give it a hard name—the source of much that is best and worst amongst us, our English rulers take no account, and are often as ready to charge us with a conviction, which was no more than a caprice, as they are to nail us down to some determination, which was simply a drollery: and until some intelligent traveller does for us what I lately perceived a clever tourist did for the Japanese, in explaining their modes of thought, impulses, and passions to the English, I despair of our being better known in Downing Street than we now are.

Captain Curtis—for it is right to give him his rank—was fearfully nervous and uneasy, and though he tried to eat his breakfast with an air

of unconcern and carelessness, he broke his egg with a tremulous hand, and listened with painful eagerness every time Walpole spoke.

"I wish somebody would send us the *Standard*, when it is known that the Lord Lieutenant's secretary has turned Fenian," said Kilgobbin. "Won't there be a grand Tory outcry over the unprincipled Whigs?"

"The papers need know nothing whatever of the incident," interposed Curtis, anxiously, "if old Flood is not busy enough to inform them."

"Who is old Flood?" asked Walpole.

"A Tory J. P., who has copied out a considerable share of your correspondence," said Kilgobbin.

"And four letters in a lady's hand," added Dick, "that he imagines to be a treasonable correspondence by symbol."

"I hope Mr. Walpole," said Kate, "will rather accept felony to the law than falsehood to the lady."

"You don't mean to say—" began Walpole, angrily; then, correcting his irritable manner, he added, "Am I to suppose my letters have been read?"

"Well, roughly looked through," said Curtis. "Just a glance here and there to catch what they meant."

"Which I must say was quite unnecessary," said Walpole, haughtily.

"It was a sort of journal of yours," blundered out Curtis, who had a most unhappy knack of committing himself, "that they opened first, and they saw an entry with Kilgobbin Castle at the top of it, and the date last July."

"There was nothing political in that, I'm sure," said Walpole.

"No, not exactly, but a trifle rebellious all the same; the words 'we this evening learned a Fenian song, 'The time to begin,' and rather suspect it is time to leave off; the Greek better-looking than ever and more dangerous.'"

Curtis's last words were drowned in the laugh that now shook the table; indeed, except Walpole and Nina herself, they actually roared with laughter, which burst out afresh, as Curtis, in his innocence, said, "We couldn't make out about the Greek, but we hoped we'd find out later on."

"And I fervently trust you did," said Kilgobbin.

"I'm afraid not; there was something about somebody called Joe, that the Greek wouldn't have him, or disliked him, or snubbed him—indeed I forget the words."

"You are quite right, sir, to distrust your memory," said Walpole; "it has betrayed you most egregiously already."

"On the contrary," burst in Kilgobbin, "I am delighted with this proof of the Captain's acuteness; tell us something more, Curtis."

"There was then 'From the upper castle yard, Maude,' whoever Maude is, 'says, 'Deny it all, and say you never were there,' not so easy as she thinks, with a broken right arm, and a heart not quite so whole as it ought to be.'"

"There, sir—with the permission of my friends here—I will ask you

to conclude your reminiscences of my private papers, which can have no possible interest for any one but myself."

"Quite wrong in that," cried Kilgobbin, wiping his eyes, which had run over with laughter. "There's nothing I'd like so much as to hear more of them."

"What was that about his heart?" whispered Curtis to Kate; "was he wounded in the side also?"

"I believe so," said she, drily; "but I believe he has got quite over it by this time."

"Will you say a word or two about me, Miss Kearney?" whispered he again; "I'm not sure I improved my case by talking so freely; but as I saw you all so outspoken, I thought I'd fall into your ways."

"Captain Curtis is much concerned for any fault he may have committed in this unhappy business," said Kate; "and he trusts that the agitation and excitement of the Donogan escape will excuse him."

"That's your policy now," interposed Kilgobbin. "Catch the Fenian fellow, and nobody will remember the other incident."

"We mean to give out that we know he has got clear away to America," said Curtis, with an air of intense cunning. "And to lull his suspicions, we have notices in print to say that no further rewards are to be given for his apprehension, so that he'll get a false confidence, and move about as before."

"With such acuteness as yours on his trail, his arrest is certain," said Walpole, gravely.

"Well, I hope so, too," said Curtis, in good faith for the compliment. "Didn't I take up nine men for the search of arms here, though there were only five? One of them turned evidence," added he, gravely; "he was the fellow that swore Miss Kearney stood between you and the fire after they wounded you."

"You are determined to make Mr. Walpole your friend," whispered Nina in his ear; "don't you see, sir, that you are ruining yourself?"

"I have often been puzzled to explain how it was that crime went unpunished in Ireland," said Walpole, sententiously.

"And you know now?" asked Curtis.

"Yes; in a great measure, you have supplied me with the information."

"I believe it's all right now," muttered the Captain to Kate. "If the swell owns that I have put him up to a thing or two, he'll not throw me over."

"Would you give me three minutes of your time?" whispered Gorman O'Shea to Lord Kilgobbin, as they arose from table.

"Half-an-hour, my boy, or more if you want it. Come along with me now into my study, and we'll be safe there from all interruption."

CHAPTER XLVI.

SAGE ADVICE.

"So then you're in a hobble with your aunt," said Mr. Kearney, as he believed he had summed up the meaning of a very blundering explanation by Gorman O'Shea; "isn't that it?"

"Yes, sir; I suppose it comes to that."

"The old story, I've no doubt, if we only knew it—as old as the Patriarchs: the young ones go into debt, and think it very hard that the elders dislike the paying it."

"No, no; I have no debts—at least, none to speak of."

"It's a woman, then? Have you gone and married some good-looking girl, with no fortune and less family? Who is she?"

"Not even that, sir," said he, half impatient at seeing how little attention had been bestowed on his narrative.

"Tis bad enough, no doubt," continued the old man, still in pursuit of his own reflections; "not but there's scores of things worse: for if a man is a good fellow at heart, he'll treat the woman all the better for what she has cost him. That is one of the good sides of selfishness; and when you have lived as long as me, Gorman, you'll find out how often there's something good to be squeezed out of a bad quality, just as though it were a bit of our nature that was depraved, but not gone to the devil entirely."

"There is no woman in the case here, sir," said O'Shea, bluntly, for these speculations only irritated him.

"Ho, ho! I have it then," cried the old man. "You've been burning your fingers with rebellion. It's the Fenians have got a hold of you."

"Nothing of the kind, sir. If you'll just read these two letters. The one is mine, written on the morning I came here: here is my aunt's. The first is not word for word as I sent it, but as well as I can remember. At all events, it will show how little I had provoked the answer. There, that's the document that came along with my trunks, and I have never heard from her since."

"*'DEAR NEPHEW,'*" read out the old man, after patiently adjusting his spectacles—"O'Shea's Barn is not an inn,'—And more's the pity," added he; "for it would be a model house of entertainment. You'd say any one could have a sirloin of beef or a saddle of mutton; but where Miss Betty gets hers is quite beyond me. 'Nor are the horses at public livery,'" read he out. "I think I may say, if they were, that Kattoo won't be hired out again to the young man that took her over the fences. 'As you seem fond of warnings,'" continued he, aloud—"Ho, ho! that's at you for coming over here to tell me about the search-warrant; and she tells you to mind your own business; and droll enough it is. We always fancy we're saying an impertinence to a man when we tell him to attend to what concerns him most. It shows at least that we think meddling a

luxury. And then she adds, 'Kilgobbin is welcome to you,' and I can only say you are welcome to Kilgobbin,—ay, and in her own words—'with such regularity and order as the meals succeed.'—'All the luggage belonging to you,' &c. and 'I am very respectfully, your Aunt.' By my conscience, there was no need to sign it! That was old Miss Betty all the world over!" and he laughed till his eyes ran over, though the rueful face of young O'Shea was staring at him all the time. "Don't look so gloomy, O'Shea," cried Kearney: "I have not so good a cook, nor, I'm sorry to say, so good a cellar, as at the Barn; but there are young faces, and young voices and young laughter, and a light step on the stairs; and if I know anything, or rather, if I remember anything, these will warm a heart at your age better than '44 claret or the crustiest port that ever stained a decanter."

"I am turned out, sir—sent adrift on the world," said the young man, despondently.

"And it is not so bad a thing after all, take my word for it, boy. It's a great advantage now and then to begin life as a vagabond. It takes a deal of snobbery out of a fellow to lie under a haystack, and there's no better cure for pretension than a dinner of cold potatoes. Not that I say you need the treatment—far from it—but our distinguished friend Mr. Walpole wouldn't be a bit the worse of such an alternative."

"If I am left without a shilling in the world?"

"You must try what you can do on sixpence,—the whole thing is how you begin. I used not to be able to eat my dinner when I did not see the fellow in a white tie standing before the sideboard, and the two flunkies in plush and silk stockings at either side of the table; and when I perceived that the decanters had taken their departure, and that it was beer I was given to drink, I felt as if I had dined, and was ready to go out and have a smoke in the open air; but a little time, even without any patience but just time, does it all."

"Time won't teach a man to live upon nothing."

"It would be very hard for him if it did; let him begin by having few wants, and work hard to supply means for them."

"Work hard! why, sir, if I laboured from daylight to dark, I'd not earn the wages of the humblest peasant, and I'd not know how to live on it."

"Well, I have given you all the philosophy in my budget, and to tell you the truth, Gorman, except so far as coming down in the world in spite of myself, I know mighty little about the fine precepts I have been giving you; but this I know, you have a roof over your head here, and you're heartily welcome to it; and who knows but your aunt may come to terms all the sooner, because she sees you here?"

"You are very generous to me, and I feel it deeply," said the young man; but he was almost choked with the words.

"You have told me already, Gorman, that your aunt gave you no other reason against coming here than that I had not been to call on you; and I believe you—believe you thoroughly; but tell me now, with

the same frankness, was there nothing passing in your own mind,—had you no suspicions or misgivings, or something of the same kind, to keep you away? Be candid with me, now, and speak it out freely.”

“None, on my honour: I was sorely grieved to be told I must not come, and thought very often of rebelling, so that indeed, when I did rebel, I was in a measure prepared for the penalty, though scarcely so heavy as this.”

“Don’t take it to heart. It will come right yet—everything comes right if we give it time—and there’s plenty of time to the fellow who is not five-and-twenty. It’s only the old dogs, like myself, who are always doing their match against time, are in a hobble. To feel that every minute of the clock is something very like three weeks of the almanack, flurries a man, when he wants to be cool and collected. Put your hat on a peg, and make your home here. If you want to be of use, Kitty will show you scores of things to do about the garden, and we never object to see a brace of snipe at the end of dinner, though there’s nobody cares to shoot them; and the bog trout—for all their dark colour—are excellent eating, and I know you can throw a line. All I say is, do something, and something that takes you into the open air. Don’t get to lying about in easy-chairs and reading novels; don’t get to singing duets and philandering about with the girls. May I never, if I’d not rather find a brandy-flask in your pocket than Tennyson’s poems!

CHAPTER XLVII.

REPROOF.

“SAY it out frankly, Kate,” cried Nina, as with flashing eyes and heightened colour she paced the drawing-room from end to end, with that bold sweeping stride which in moments of passion betrayed her. “Say it out. I know perfectly what you are hinting at.”

“I never hint,” said the other, gravely; “least of all, with those I love.”

“So much the better. I detest an equivocate. If I am to be shot, let me look the fire in the face.”

“There is no question of shooting at all. I think you are very angry for nothing.”

“Angry for nothing! Do you call that studied coldness you have observed towards me all day yesterday nothing? Is your ceremonious manner—exquisitely polite, I will not deny—is that nothing? Is your chilling salute when we met—I half believe you curtsied—nothing? That you shun me, that you take pains not to keep my company, never to be with me alone, is past denial.”

“And I do not deny it,” said Kate, with a voice of calm and quiet meaning.

“At last, then, I have the avowal. You own that you love me no longer.”

"No, I own nothing of the kind: I love you very dearly; but I see that our ideas of life are so totally unlike, that unless one should bend and conform to the other, we cannot blend our thoughts in that harmony which perfect confidence requires. You are so much above me in many things, so much more cultivated and gifted—I was going to say civilized, and I believe I might——"

"Ta—ta—ta," cried Nina, impatiently. "These flatteries are very ill-timed."

"So they would be, if they were flatteries; but if you had patience to hear me out, you'd have learned that I meant a higher flattery for myself."

"Don't I know it? don't I guess?" cried the Greek. "Have not your downcast eyes told it? and that look of sweet humility that says, 'At least I am not a flirt?'"

"Nor am I," said Kate, coldly.

"And I am! Come, now, do confess. You want to say it."

"With all my heart I wish you were not!" And Kate's eyes swam as she spoke.

"And what if I tell you that I know it—that in the very employment of the arts of what you call coquetry, I am but exercising those powers of pleasing by which men are led to frequent the salon instead of the café, and like the society of the cultivated and refined better than——"

"No, no, no!" burst in Kate. "There is no such mock principle in the case. You are a flirt because you like the homage it secures you, and because, as you do not believe in such a thing as an honest affection, you have no scruple about trifling with a man's heart."

"So much for captivating that bold hussar," cried Nina.

"For the moment I was not thinking of him."

"Of whom then?"

"Of that poor Captain Curtis, who has just ridden away."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes. He has a pretty wife and three nice little girls, and they are the happiest people in the world. They love each other, and love their home—so, at least, I am told, for I scarcely know them myself."

"And what have I done with *him*?"

"Sent him away sad and doubtful—very doubtful if the happiness he believed in was the real article after all; and disposed to ask himself how it was that his heart was beating in a new fashion, and that some new sense had been added to his nature, of which he had no inkling before. Sent him away with the notes of a melody floating through his brain, so that the merry laugh of his children will be a discord, and such a memory of a soft glance, that his wife's bright look will be meaningless."

"And I have done all this? Poor me!"

"Yes, and done it so often, that it leaves no remorse behind it."

"And the same, I suppose, with the others?"

"With Mr. Walpole, and Dick, and Mr. O'Shea, and Mr. Atlee, too, when he was here, in their several ways."

"Oh, in theirs, not in mine, then?"

"I am but a bungler in my explanation. I wished to say that you adapted your fascinations to the tastes of each."

"What a siren!"

"Well, yes—what a siren: for they're all in love in some fashion or other; but I could have forgiven you these, had you spared the married man."

"So that you actually envy that poor prisoner the gleam of light and the breath of cold air that comes between his prison bars,—that one moment of ecstasy that reminds him how he once was free and at large, and no manacles to weigh him down? You will not let him even touch bliss in imagination? Are you not more cruel than *me*?"

"This is mere nonsense," said Kate boldly. "You either believe that man was fooling *you*, or that you have sent him away unhappy? take which of these you like."

"Can't your rustic nature see that there is a third case, quite different from both, and that Harry Curtis went off believing——"

"Was he Harry Curtis?" broke in Kate.

"He was dear Harry when I said good-by," said Nina, calmly.

"Oh, then I give up everything,—I throw up my brief."

"So you ought, for you have lost your cause long ago."

"Even that poor Donogan was not spared, and heaven knows he had troubles enough on his head to have pleaded some pity for him."

"And is there no kind word to say of *me*, Kate?"

"Oh, Nina, how ashamed you make me of my violence, when I dare to blame you! but if I did not love you so dearly I could better bear you should have a fault."

"I have only one, then?"

"I know of no great one but this. I mean, I know of none that endangers good nature and right feeling."

"And are you so sure that this does? Are you so sure that what you are faulting is not the manner and the way of a world you have not seen? that all these levities, as you would call them, are not the ordinary wear of people whose lives are passed where there is more tolerance and less rain?"

"Be serious, Nina, for a moment, and own that it was by intention you were in the approach when Captain Curtis rode away,—that you said something to him, or looked something—perhaps both—on which he got down from his horse and walked beside you for full a mile?"

"All true," said Nina, calmly. "I confess to every part of it."

"I'd far rather that you said you were sorry for it."

"But I am not; I'm very glad—I'm very proud of it. Yes, look as reproachfully as you like, Kate! 'very proud' was what I said."

"Then I am indeed sorry," said Kate, growing pale as she spoke.

"I don't think after all this sharp lecturing of me that you deserve much of my confidence, and if I make you any, Kate, it is not by way of

exculpation, for I do not accept your blame: it is simply out of caprice—mind that, and that I am not thinking of defending myself.”

“I can easily believe that,” said Kate, drily.

And the other continued:—“When Captain Curtis was talking to your father, and discussing the chances of capturing Donogan, he twice or thrice mentioned Harper and Fry—names which somehow seemed familiar to me; and on thinking the matter over when I went to my room, I opened Donogan’s pocket-book and there found how these names had become known to me. Harper and Fry were tanners, in Cork Street, and theirs was one of the addresses by which, if I had occasion to warn Donogan, I could write to him. On hearing these names from Curtis, it struck me that there might be treachery somewhere. Was it that these men themselves had turned traitors to the cause? or had another betrayed them? Whichever way the matter went, Donogan was evidently in great danger: for this was one of the places he regarded as perfectly safe.

“What was to be done? I dared not ask advice on any side. To reveal the suspicions which were tormenting me required that I should produce this pocket-book, and to whom could I impart this man’s secret? I thought of your brother Dick, but he was from home, and even if he had not been, I doubt if I should have told him. I should have come to you, Kate, but that grand rebukeful tone you had taken up this last twenty-four hours repelled me; and, finally, I took counsel with myself. I set off just before Captain Curtis started, to what you have called waylay him in the avenue.

“Just below the beech-copse he came up; and then that small flirtation of the drawing-room, which has caused you so much anger and me such a sharp lesson, stood me in good stead, and enabled me to arrest his progress by some chance word or two, and at last so far to interest him that he got down and walked along at my side. I shall not shock you by recalling the little tender ‘nothings’ that passed between us, nor dwell on the small mockeries of sentiment which we exchanged—I hope very harmlessly—but proceed at once to what I felt my object. He was profuse of his gratitude for what I had done for him with Walpole, and firmly believed that my intercession alone had saved him; and so I went on to say that the best reparation he could make for his blunder would be some exercise of well-directed activity when occasion should offer. ‘Suppose, for instance,’ said I, ‘you could capture this man Donogan?’

“‘The very thing I hope to do,’ cried he. ‘The train is laid already. One of my constables has a brother in a well-known house in Dublin, the members of which, men of large wealth and good position, have long been suspected of holding intercourse with the rebels. Through his brother, himself a Fenian, this man has heard that a secret committee will meet at this place on Monday evening next, at which Donogan will be present. Molloy, another head-centre, will also be there, and Cummins, who escaped from Carrickfergus.’ I took down all the names, Kate, the moment we parted, and while they were fresh in my memory. ‘We’ll draw the net

on them all,' said he; 'and such a haul has not been made since '98. The rewards alone will amount to some thousands.' It was then I said, 'And is there no danger, Harry?' "

"Oh, Nina!"

"Yes, darling, it was very dreadful, and I felt it so; but somehow one is carried away by a burst of feeling at certain moments, and the shame only comes too late. Of course it was wrong of me to call him Harry, and he, too, with a wife at home, and five little girls—or three, I forget which—should never have sworn that he loved me, nor said all that mad nonsense about what he felt in that region where chief constables have their hearts; but I own to great tenderness and a very touching sensibility on either side. Indeed, I may add here, that the really sensitive natures amongst men are never found under forty-five; but for genuine, uncalculating affection, for the sort of devotion that flings consequences to the winds, I'd say, give me fifty-eight or sixty."

"Nina, do not make me hate you," said Kate, gravely.

"Certainly not, dearest, if a little hypocrisy will avert such a misfortune. And so, to return to my narrative, I learned as accurately as a gentleman so much in love could condescend to inform me, of all the steps taken to secure Donogan at this meeting, or to capture him later on if he should try to make his escape by sea."

"You mean, then, to write to Donogan and apprise him of his danger?"

"It is done. I wrote the moment I got back here. I addressed him as Mr. James Bredin, care of Jonas Mullory, Esq., 41, New Street, which was the first address in the list he gave me. I told him of the peril he ran, and what his friends were also threatened by, and I recounted the absurd seizure of Mr. Walpole's effects here; and, last of all, what a dangerous rival he had in this Captain Curtis, who was ready to desert wife, children, and the constabulary to-morrow for me; and assuring him confidentially that I was well worth greater sacrifices of better men, I signed my initials in Greek letters."

"Marvellous caution and great discretion," said Kate, solemnly.

"And now come over to the drawing-room, where I have promised to sing for Mr. O'Shea some little ballad that he dreamed over all the night through; and then there's something else—what is it? what is it?"

"How should I know, Nina? I was not present at your arrangement."

"Never mind; I'll remember it presently. It will come to my recollection while I'm singing that song."

"If emotion is not too much for you."

"Just so, Kate—sensibilities permitting; and, indeed," she said, "I remember it already. It was luncheon."

